THE

HISTORY

OF

Miſs BIDDY FARMER,

OR,

MEMOIRS of my OWN LIFE.

Interſperſed with

A Variety of Characters, both in High and Low Life.

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THE HISTORY OF My own Life.

CHAP. I.

Miſs Biddy Farmer's *ſuppoſed Parentage. Educated by her Godmother Lady* Betty G——s. *Lady* Betty *marries the Earl of* B——n. *Takes* Biddy *into her Service. Death of Lady* Betty. Biddy *marries Lord* Richard G—r—d. *Keeps it ſecret.*

NO Remark is more common than of the Shortſightedneſs of Mankind in general; yet each Individual prides himſelf in a deeper Penetration into the Tranſactions of his Fellows than his Neighbour; but, probably, were all Things to be expoſed to an unſcreened and naked Review, the greateſt pretended Connoiſſeurs would appear to be the moſt deceived of any.

I AM the rather induced to inſiſt upon the Reality of my Sentiments, from the Example of my own ſelf, now in my View, who had lived to my twenty-ſeventh year, before I had imbibed the leaſt genuine Intimation from any one, either who I was, or of what Name or Family.

I HAD been bred up as the Daughter of *Mary Thomas*, a Carpenter's Wife in the Liberty of *Weſtminſter*, by her firſt Huſband *Giles Farmer*, a Chairman to a very noble Family, not far from St. *James*'s; but had received a much more liberal and polite Education, than uſually falls to the Share of Children, deſcended from Perſons of equal Occupation, either with my own, or my Step-Father: My Mother always accounting for it amongſt her Acquaintance, from the Generoſity of the Lady *Betty G——s*, in whoſe Service ſhe had formerly lived, and who had honoured me with the Title of her Godchild, nay, ſo fond was ſhe of me, that I frequently ſpent a Month or two at a Time in her Family.

I WAS never put upon any Manner of ſervile Labour at my Mother's, my Godmother having forbidden it; but my moſt uſual Exerciſes were, either a Book, or Needle-work, in the former of which I moſt delighted; though I had wrought no ſmall Quantity of the latter, for my Godmother, who never failed of rewarding me moſt amply for it; and then, Nature having formed me of a moſt mild, and obliging Diſpoſition, I was no leſs beloved by my Father-in-Law, than if I had been his own Child.

ABOUT

ABOUT my thirteenth Year, my Godmother was courted by the Earl of *B* —— *n*, an elderly Gentleman, in reſpect of herſelf, who was then as fine a Lady, as moſt were in *England*.

THIS Nobleman, as the Story went of him, had in his very early Life arrived in *London*, a moſt helpleſs Lad from *Lancaſhire*, where he had left a very diſtreſſed Family, of ſeveral Brothers and Siſters behind him.

HIS natural Propenſity to Buſineſs, and the Diſdain wherewith he ſuſtained a Life of Rags and Beggary (no Remedy againſt which preſented to him in his own Country) together with the great Matters he had heard to be attainable in *London*, by ſuch whom Fortune favoured there, invited him, to commit himſelf to the Patronage of a Carrier of thoſe Parts, whom he had engaged to aſſiſt upon the Journey, for the ſake of his Proviſion by the Way.

THE Lad proved ſo willing and tractable upon the Road, that on his Arrival in Town, the Carrier made a Point of recommending him, to the Tapſter of the Inn he put up at. Here, by his ſuperior Diligence, he did Credit to his kind Patron, and for the Space of two Years, behaved himſelf ſo inculpably, that the Carrier began to claim an Intereſt in him; Inſomuch, that being one Day at the Delivery of a Parcel of Goods to a wholeſale Dealer, who chanced to enquire of him after one of his Country Lads for an Errand-boy; the Carrier put in for his Pupil, by ſo favourable an Account of him, that the Dra-

per, delighted with his Character, directly received him into his Family.

IN about ſix Years Time, having picked up ſome Smattering of Letters and Accounts, from the Journeymen and Apprentices, (for his aſpiring Genius ſuffered him not the Indulgence of idle Hours) he was advanced to the Compting-houſe, in which Capacity, ſoon becoming moſt neceſſary to his Maſter, he dived ſo deeply into the Myſteries of Trade, that about his twenty-eighth Year, his Maſter dying, he not only gained Credit for his whole Stock, but was held in ſuch Eſteem by the Factors, Clothiers, and others who had traded with his Maſter, for an active, induſtrious, and judicious Man, that through the Countenance they afforded him in his proper Occupation, he was ſoon enabled, even to outſtrip them at their own, for he fell into ſo conſiderable a Way of Exportation, as ſcarce to be equalled, by a ſingle Merchant upon the Exchange.

WEALTH then rolling in from numberleſs Channels, his ambitious Inclination, ever reſtleſs till it became boyant, firſt byaſſed him to Marriage with one of the moſt opulent City Heireſſes; when, to compleat the Progreſs of his Advancment, he purchaſed an *Iriſh* Earldome, in order to advance the Family of the *G—r—ds*; having ſome Time before, founded a Free-ſchool, in his own native Pariſh, to perpetuate his Memory there.

THE News of my Godmother's Marriage, was a ſevere blow to me, who had ever built vaſt Hopes upon her future Benefactions to me;

me: For the Dread of a riſing Generation of her own, ſo damped my Expectations, leſt they ſhould not only ſupplant me in her Ladyſhip's Favour, but at length, wholly withdraw her Benevolence from me, that I became almoſt inconſolable, notwithſtanding all my Mother's Endeavours to raiſe my Spirits; who, leſt I ſhould deſpond, daily cheared me with Aſſurances, that I need neither fear my Godmother's Affection whilſt ſhe lived, or her Concern for my Proviſion, and that in an handſome Manner too, at her Deceaſe.

THIS ſeeming Certainty of my Mother's, kept me ſtill Heart-whole, nor wanted I Encouragement thereto, from the Steadineſs of my Godmother's Proceedings towards me, even with as liberal an Hand as before her Marriage, nay, rather exceeding therein; till, in the Fourth Year of her Marriage, ſhe took me home to her, as a Companion for Lady *Margaret* her eldeſt Child, then much about three Years old.

LORD *B——n* had a Son (by his firſt Lady) Lord *G——r——d*, who was about two Years my Senior, towards whom, for his obliging Behaviour to her, my Lady bore little leſs Affection than to her own Offſpring; nor could ſhe refrain from daily Teſtimonies of it, either to himſelf, or thoſe about her.

So long as my dear Lady lived, I eſteemed myſelf one of the moſt happy Creatures on Earth, I was exceedingly diligent in my Employment, nor could my Care of her Infant-Daughter have been repaid with more

poſſible Tenderneſs than my Lady conſtantly expreſſed for me: For I could plainly perceive, that ſhe ſtudied frequent Excurſions for the young Lady, meerly for my Gratification and Amuſement; nor ſeemed ſhe ever better pleaſed, than when ſhe was ſure ſhe had delighted me: But this laſted not long; for my little Charge was ſcarce five Years old, when my good Lady her Mother died, of a Surfeit ſhe had taken, by eating Peaches when ſhe was hot.

My Sorrow for ſo invaluable a Miſtreſs, was paſt Expreſſion for ſome Time; but as that by Degrees abated, I began to conſider with myſelf, by what means I might be aſcertained, whether my Godmother had made any future Proviſion for me or not; but as my Lord had never yet mentioned any ſuch thing, nor had I ever heard of any Will that ſhe had made, I took the earlieſt Opportunity that offered of calling upon my Mother for her Advice in the Affair; and to enquire, whether my Godmother had ever hinted to her, what ſhe would do for me, and by what Means.

My Lady had now been dead a full Month; but it being the very firſt Viſit I had made to my Mother ſince her Death, ſhe fell into ſuch a Fit of weeping at Sight of me, as by no Intreaties of mine to be reclaimed from. I wondered not, at firſt, at the Extravagance of her Grief, imputing it to the Fondneſs ſhe had imbibed for a former Miſtreſs, who had ever proved ſo true a Friend to her; but, at length, could perceive ſhe had ſomewhat at Heart, which ſhe labour-

ed

ed with to greater Exceſs, than the Loſs of a Miſtreſs only could have occaſioned.

ON every the leaſt Relaxation of her Paſſion ſhe would fix her Eyes immoveable upon me; but when about to utter her Mind by Speech, the Tears would again interrupt her Intention, till ſeizing the Opportunity for venting my Errand to her, ſhe aſſured me, that ſhe had often heard my Lady ſay, that ſhe would give me ten thouſand Pounds in Marriage, could ſhe but procure me a Match ſuitable to her own Inclination; but added, that ſhe would not diſcloſe ſo much to me, leaſt it might make me vain, and above my Buſineſs. My Mother alſo inſiſted, that ſhe was well aſſured my Godmother, by ſome means or other, had made a Proviſion for me; but, as I was fearful of mentioning any ſuch thing to the Earl, we let it reſt till Time might produce a Diſcovery.

IT Was a little more than three Months after the Deceaſe of my Lady, that Lord *G——r——d*, who, from my firſt Introduction into the Family, had behaved with an uncommon Complacency towards me, declared his Paſſion for me in the moſt finiſhed Strains; which, tho', from a Senſe of my Duty to his Father, I at firſt neglected, yet his frequent Repitions of the ſame, accompanied with the profoundeſt Regard for me, and Solemnity of his Engagements of an honourable Affection only, at Length became Arguments too potent for me to withſtand.

HIS Lordſhip's Tender of Marriage prevailed for my Conſent; and after very

ſlight Preparations for that Solemnity, we were privately united in Wedlock: For his Lordſhip inſiſted, that it ſhould be reſerved as a ſecret from his Father, leſt, being in his own Temper very lofty, it might move him to diſinherit him.

I COULD not but judge this Caution prudent, and for ſome little Time after we were firſt married, his Lordſhip ſeemed as deſirous of my ſtill retaining my Poſt in his Father's Family as I myſelf was; but that laſted not long; for as he was, to all Appearance, exceſſively fond of me, we being unable to ſteal ſo many uninterrupted Meetings at his Father's as his Lordſhip ſeemed anxious for, he ſoon inſiſted upon my leaving the Earl's Service, and retiring to a private Lodging that he had provided for me. For *Biddy*, ſaid he, it cuts me to the very Soul, to hear you commanded, even by my Father himſelf; nor can I bear to be the daily Spectator of a Perſon ſo dear to me, in a leſs worthy Station than becomes my Lady.

THE ſingular Obligations I ſtood indebted to his Lordſhip in, excluſive of the Love I bore him, which was not to have been exceeded, had already reduced me to a perfect Acquieſcence in his every Sentiment; and I obeyed him. He accommodated me at a little Diſtance from Town, in as elegant a Taſte as could become his Lady, under the Fortune he was then poſſeſſed of; but he ſoon coming of Age, and thereupon to an Eſtate which had been left him by his Mother's Uncle, of upwards of Three Thouſand Pounds a Year, with an elegant Family Seat upon it; he

he then preſented me with a Chariot, and further enlarged our Family and Attendants; when, leſt our Meetings ſhould become too public, ſo near Town, I was removed to his Seat in *Hertfordſhire*, about Twenty-five Miles from *London*, where he uſually ſpent Four Days of the Seven, in each Week with me.

I HAD brought his Lordſhip three Children, two Sons, and a Daughter, in as many Years; of all whom he was ſo extremely fond, that they became freſh Guarantees of our ſubſiſting mutual Affection and Confidence; nor could any two on Earth be more intimately attached to each other, than his Lordſhip and I were.

I HAD had but little Opportunity of my Mother's Company, during my Reſidence near *London*, and much leſs, ſince my Retirement to *Hertfordſhire:* For knowing how exactly ſcrupulous Lord *G---r---d* was, of divulging our Marriage, I had not only avoided all my former Companions, who might, through Jealouſy, have ſuſpected it from my Manner of Living; but had in great Meaſure, extended the Caution even to my Mother herſelf, though ſhe had been preſent at our Nuptials; inſomuch, that I had not ſeen her thrice ſince I had been ſettled in the Country; but Mr. *Thomas*, her then Huſband, had often been at my Houſe, on many Occaſions, in his Way of Buſineſs.

CHAP. II.

Character of Stringer. *Accompanies Lord* G---r---d *in his Viſits to* Biddy. Stringer's *Villainy.* Biddy *reconciled. Stratagem to debauch* Biddy; *how prevented.* Stringer *is ſeverely diſciplined.*

IF it was poſſible for a Man to have adored his Wife for Years together, certainly, Lord *G—r—d* was the Inſtance; and if it were poſſible for a Woman to have neither Will or Affection, but what were excited from Love and Obedience to her Huſband, I muſt, without Vanity, declare myſelf to have been the Example, who can ſafely affirm, that in every Action in Life, my Choice was determined, ſolely, from the Motive of its Agreeableneſs, or Diſreliſh to his Pleaſure; nor had I the leaſt Reaſon in the World for varying my Conduct; for my dear Lord was ever ſo cautious of limiting his Inclination, till by a ſide Advance, he had diſcovered mine, that though I appeared to have been actuated by his Propoſitions, yet, in Fact, he offered none, but what he was aſſured would receive my Countenance and Approval.

THUS exquiſitely did our Time paſs, for the firſt four Years of our Marriage-ſtate; nor had I, or have I now, the leaſt Doubt but that it would have ſo continued for our whole

whole Lives, without Interruption, had our Union ſo long remained a Secret from Lord *B——n*; but Fate had otherwiſe ordained; for in our fifth Year, Lord *G---r---d*, out of the peculiar Regard he had for one Mr. *Stringer*, an old School-fellow of his at *Eaton*, and his conſtant, and almoſt inſeparable Companion when in *London*, brought him down to pay myſelf and the Children a Viſit; for that as he then aſſured me, *Stringer* and he having ſuch an entire Confidence in each other, as from their Infancy, to have been animated but with one Soul, he was certain he could truſt him, equally with himſelf; nor could he longer endure the Uneaſineſs he had ſuffered, in conſerving the Secret of our Marriage from him.

HIS Lordſhip having ever been ſo anxious for perſevering in Privacy, I replied, that himſelf was the beſt able to judge of Mr. *Stringer*'s Taciturnity, and I hoped, that from a Senſe of Affection for his Lordſhip, Nothing would eſcape him to his Lordſhip's Diſpleaſure; but owned, that as he had ſo long been detained from the Knowledge of it, I could ſcarce have imagined, it would have been an Inconvenience, had he ſtill remained ſo.

MY dearreſt *Biddy*, ſaid his Lordſhip, *Stringer* and I commenced Friendſhip, at eleven Years of Age, and have inviolably maintained it ever ſince.——Poor Man! added he, though born to the Expectation of a pretty Fortune, his Father's Affairs at his Death, turning out inexpreſſably bad, I have, from the conſtant Regard I ever bore him,

him, allowed him a Support from my own Income, when it was at firſt, but eight Hundred a Year, and always defrayed his Expences, whenever we were in Company together, which I may ſay, hath been almoſt daily; and ſince I have been in Poſſeſſion of my Uncle's Eſtate, I have penſioned him at Two Hundred Pounds a Year, beſides clearing his Way in my Company as before; from whence, and from the natural Tendency of his Inclination to me, I am well aſſured, that he would die upon the Rack, before he would diſcloſe the leaſt Tittle of what I ſhould enjoin him Privacy in: For I have ever been perſuaded, that he rejoices at my Gratification, even beyond his own.

His Lordſhip having thus quieted my Fears relative to Mr. *Stringer*, and pleaſing himſelf at *Stringer's* Participation of the Enjoyments of Life with us; he being a moſt accompliſhed Gentleman, and an agreeable Companion, for ſome Weeks conſtantly brought him down with him, and at his Return, took him back again; till he and I by Degrees growing familiar, his Lordſhip would ſometimes leave him behind him for a Day or two, in his own Abſence, to keep me Company.

This had not often happened, before *Stringer*, to my Thinking encroached too far upon the Liberty granted him, which ſet me upon my Guard againſt too cloſe Intimacy with him; but one Morning, his Lordſhip, upon his Departure for *London*, intimating his Deſign of ſtaying there for the

the beſt Part of the Week, Mr. *Stringer* laid hold of that Opportunity, for puſhing his Suit to me with great Earneſtneſs; in direct Terms, offering me his Love: Nay, ſo importunate was he, that it even put me to a Non-plus, in what Manner I ſhould behave to him. For, though I received the Indignity with all becoming Diſdain, yet, as an open Diſcovery of it, might in its Conſequence, have much affected his Lordſhip's future Peace, I was deſirous of ſome ſerious Reflection upon the Subject by myſelf, before I proceeded to that Extremity, which my natural Inclination moſt prompted me to, and which I judged, my own Character to require; ſo that without other Teſtimony of my Reſentment, than was apparent from my Countenance, occaſioned by the adverſe Suggeſtions of my Mind, I ſtarting up, ruſhed violently out of the Room, and retiring to my Chamber, left him.

IT would be impoſſible to deſcribe them, were I to attempt a Diſcloſure of the ſeveral Workings of my Brain, in my Solitude. In the Height and Vigour of my Reſentment, I had reſolved, by my own Authority, to have forbidden him the Houſe, and in Caſe of his Non-complyance, to have impelled him thence, by the Aid of my Servants.

As my Paſſion ſubſided, I ſlackened in my Purſuit of theſe violent Meaſures, by reflecting, that ſhould I diſmiſs him before my Lord's Return, his own Story would of Conſequence be firſt heard, which in the Dreſs he would undoubtedly cloath it with, might poſſibly prejudice his Lordſhip in his Favour,

and in equal Measure, draw my Story into Discredit with him; for which Reason, I wholly discarded that Purpose.

THEN how to appear in *Stringer*'s Presence again, distressed me to no small Degree: For, as I was in Health, I could have no plausible Plea for keeping my Chamber, till his Lordship arrived; neither had I the least apparent Reason, in the Eye of my Family, publickly to shew a Disregard to *Stringer*; and if I should withdraw myself at Meal-Times, what Suspicions might it not minister, injurious, perhaps, to myself, no less than to him? So that having seriously weighed all Contingencies, by the nicest Balance of my own Judgment, I at last determined to stifle my Displeasure till I should see his Lordship, and then, to submit the whole Scene to his Opinion.

I APPEARED therefore the next Morning at Breakfast as usual; but had ordered one or two of the Children, with their Nurse, into the Room before I entered. Mr. *Stringer*, as customary, paid me his Compliments, which I returned, as slightly as possible; and Breakfast ended, I went off with the Nurse and little Ones; and thus I behaved at Meal-Times, for the Three remaining Days of his Lordship's Absence.

MR. *Stringer*, had no Doubt, remarked my Conduct; however, he had sufficient Guard over himself, to prevent any further Indiscretion; so that having behaved himself more steadily for the latter Part of the Time, I was too much delighted at my Lord's Sweetness of Temper to us all, to

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caſt any Rub in its Way, at his Return; and after a few Days paſſed altogether, I became ſo well reconciled to *Stringer*'s Carriage and Deportment, little miſtruſting a Repetition of his Addreſſes, that I ſeemed to have overlooked what had paſſed; and at my Lord's next Departure for *London*, he taking *Stringer* with him, I ſaw no more of him, for a full Month after.

MR. *Stringer*, at our next Interview, behaved with ſo much Diffidence, and Caution of offending me, that relying upon the Sincerity of his Reformation, after a ſhort Probation, I again admitted him to a Familiarity with me as before, having abſolutely baniſhed all Suſpicion, of his ever renewing his Attack upon me: But let me caution all young Ladies, who may hereafter have any Attempt made upon their Virtue, never more to confer with the Man, who, from ſuch an Overture, doth but too manifeſtly expoſe the Bent of his natural Principles; for whatever Gloſſes we may ſhadow over his Actions with, the End will verify this Prediction, that his whole Artifice will be ever after upon the Stretch, for every Opportunity, upon the leaſt Conceſſions made him, to circumvent her; for every Act of his ſeeming Contrition, will but be placed in her Way as a Snare, to facillitate a future Conqueſt.

ABOUT four Months afterwards, his Lordſhip again left Mr. *Stringer* in the Country with me; but whilſt I was void of every Surmiſe of Miſchief from him, it appeared he had not been ſo idle, as I had imagined him to have

been; for he had concerted the moſt execrable Plot againſt my Honour that ever Man could invent.

My Woman, in my Lord's Abſence, conſtantly lay with me; and I had ever believed her to have been one of the moſt deſerving of her Sex; and the furtheſt Perſon in Life, from either a Tendency to Vice in herſelf, or being a Favourer of it in others. This Woman, having, as ſhe pretended, been out of Order for beſt Part of the Day, in the Evening, deſired Leave to go to Bed before me, which I granted her.

Mr. *Stringer* and I had ſupped together as uſual, and I had taken Leave for Bed; after which, according to my Nightly Cuſtom, I withdrew into the Nurſery, to look at my Children, where I commonly ſpent Half an Hour, in Chat with their Nurſe, before I retired to my own Chamber.

I had now left her, and found my Woman in Bed, with her Back to my Side, and her Cloaths in the accuſtomed Manner, lying upon a Chair by the Bed-Side, but ſhe ſeeming to ſleep very compoſedly, I undreſſed as gently as poſſible, and ſtept ſoftly into Bed, that I might by no Means diſturb her, and then I put out my Candle.

I had ſcarce ſettled myſelf into a ſleeping Poſture, before I felt her turn about, and preſently, I found her Hand ſtretched acroſs my Breaſt. This I gently removed, for Fear of waking her; but I had not wholly compoſed myſelf again, before the Arm was again over me, and from ſome unuſual Motions, gave me no ſmall Diſquiet.

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However, I displaced it a second Time; but the Ruffle it had occasioned to my Mind, had debarred my Eye-lids from closing, till upon the third Attempt of the like Nature, growing into some Displeasure, and attempting to remove it with some Emotion, I met with a more violent Resistance, than I was able to overcome.

I THEN resolved to awaken her, and to rate her into better Manners; but having turned my Face to her, upon my first Endeavour to rouse her, I was enclasped in her Arms, and almost stifled with Kisses. The Roughness of the Face that saluted me, terrified me to Distraction, I set up such a violent Shriek, as would almost have roused the Dead; nor did I in the least desist so long as either my Breath or Spirits, would serve me.

THE extravagant Out-cry that I made, and the Struggling I used, to free myself from an unwelcome Embracer, extracted the Mystery of my Surprize, from the Mouth of the perfidious *Stringer*, who still grasping me in his Arms, intreated me not to raise such a Scandal upon myself, his Lordship, and him, as the Discovery of the present Incident would occasion; but I was deaf to all his Rhetorick, extending still my Voice so successfully, that at length my own Footman knocked at my Door, to enquire what was the Matter.

No Reprieve at the Instant of Execution could ever have been more welcome to a condemned Malefactor, than his Voice to my Ears. *William*, said I, force your Way in,

or I ſhall be murdered. Raiſe the Family, or I am undone for ever.

Stringer lay all this while terrified out of his Wits; and begging me to be pacified, ſwore horribly, that he would then leave me, and declared, that if I perſiſted in detecting and expoſing him to the Servants, he would be the Death of me firſt; but when I inſiſted upon his riſing, he refuſed to quit me, and would not ſuffer me to ſtir from him; alledging, that he was determined not to ſet me at Liberty, meerly to let in the Servants upon him.

By this Time my whole Family were collected about my Door, and by their repeated Blows, had broken out the under Pannel, when the firſt Gleam of Comfort that I beheld, was a Candle, and the Head of *William*, entring through the Breach, after it.

Being now fully ſenſible that Relief was at Hand, but reflecting on the Poſture I lay in, (all the Bed-cloaths having been caſt upon the Floor in our Stuggling) I cried out to *William* to retreat, and to ſend in ſome of the Maids only, and for himſelf and the reſt of the Men, to wait without, till the Door ſhould be opened to them.

The Fellow, at my Orders, withdrew himſelf, when three of my Maids approaching me, they diſengaged me from my Oppreſſor; though not without the Exerciſe of ſome Violence; for though he was almoſt confounded at the Expectation of ſome horrid Scene to ſucceed, he had never once as yet let go his Hold of me. My Maids then hurrying on my Cloaths over me, with all Expedition,

Expedition, gave me a Glaſs of Hartſhorn and Water, to keep me from Fainting: For having exhauſted my whole Fire in the Scuffle, when my Reflections came to cool a little, it was with the utmoſt Difficulty they could keep Life in me, from the Horror which then ſurrounded me, at the Thought of what might have proved the Conſequence of that perfidious Wretch's Device, for my Deſtruction.

I WAS no ſooner capable of a Removal, than my Maids retired with me into my Dreſſing-room; where having ſecured me from further Miſchief, I ordered them to open the Door, and let in the Men upon *Stringer*. They did ſo, and inſtantly, there aroſe ſuch an Uproar, that myſelf and Maids, who were within Hearing of it, expected no leſs than Murder to have been the Iſſue of it, on one Side or the other, every Moment; but the Men not inclining to act otherwiſe than under my Direction (for it was but too apparent to them, not only what had been the Injury, but who the Aggreſſor) knocking at the Door, demanded what I would pleaſe to have done with *Stringer?*

MY Head was ſo full of the narrow Eſcape I had been favoured with, and my Rancour ſtill ſo inveterate againſt *Stringer*, that I furiouſly cried out, act as you will with the Villain; uſe him as he deſerves, a baſe Raviſher.

THEY waited but for an Hint to exaſperate them to an unlimited Fury: For away they ran to the Bed; Ariſe! ariſe, Madam! cried they, (for he had ſtill got my Woman's Night-

Night-cloaths and Shift on) Madam, pray dreſs yourſelf. We'll lay the Spirit of Adultery in you preſently. —— The World is come to a fine Paſs, in truth, when Ladies turn Raviſhers. —— Ariſe! I ſay.

Stringer, not well knowing how to behave in this Dilemma, addreſſed himſelf to them, in the moſt ſupplicatory Manner, begging them to withdraw, and he would attend their Pleaſures preſently; but they, all Fury, ſwore they would never leave him, till they had ſeen what Sort of Lady he was, then drawing off all the Bed-cloaths, which ſince my Deliverance, he had replaced over him; the Coachman began with a Laſh, and a Word; for no ſooner had we heard the Smack of the Whip, and a Cry from *Stringer* ſucceeding it, than up, up, ſaid he, and dealt him another Cut; when I preſume he became compliant, for we heard not a Word more, for about two Minutes. Then, a loud Holloo ariſing, and as loud a Laugh ſucceeding it, we perceived by their Diſcourſe, that Madam was at a Loſs, how to get properly incaſed, in her Woman's Habit.

THERE then followed ſuch a Clamour for ſome Time, that it was difficult to have gueſſed at any Meaning to it; and at length, after another Shout, they all marched off, crying out as they departed, that Mrs. *Eſther*, (meaning my Woman) muſt have been a Confederate, or how came he by her Cloaths; vowing they would ſearch her out, and diſcipline them both together, but they were ſoon out of our further Hearing, for the laſt Words which reached us were, —— Gentlemen!

tlemen!—— Good Gentlemen!——give me Leave to make my Defence,—— I have much to ſay.——Hear me Gentlemen!

IT was not long before we heard another Shout; but it ſounding flat, and at a Diſtance, we judged it to have been raiſed in the Coach-yard, which the next Room to that we were in overlooked; when the Day juſt beginning to open, the Maids were not to be reſtrained from peeping at what was going forward there.

MY Head was too full of the Bleſſing I had juſt received, to permit my Attention to wander after what they all eſteemed a noble Piece of Diverſion, but a Report was ſoon made to me, of all that had happened, at ſecond Hand; for the Wenches told me, that the Servants having conducted *Stringer* to a large Pond we had in the Yard, where our Horſes uſed to be watered, they obliged him to mount the Parapet, with a long Rope tied round his Middle; then, after ſome Expoſtulations on the Nature of his Offence, down they threw him into the Water, whilſt others, by the End of the Rope, dragged him out at the ſhallow Entrance; and this Exerciſe they repeated ſo often, that at length the Criminal was ſo ſpent, that he could ſtand no longer; when drawing him after them to the Horſe-dunghill, they laid him along, and covered him all but his Head in it, aſſured him they did it that he might ſweat freely; for that nothing would be more beneficial to him, after his Ducking-bout.

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THE wretched *Stringer*, (by this time, fully ſenſible there was no contending againſt a licentious Set of Fellows, guided only by the Law of their own Will) ſubmitted as patiently as poſſible, to whatever Fate they ſhould allot him; and whilſt he was under his Sweats, a Deputy from the Main-body was diſpatched for my Orders, whether to admit him into the Houſe, or to turn him adrift in his then wretched Condition.

I REJECTED both Propoſals, rather inclining to a middle way. As to the former Part of their Demand, I declared peremptorily againſt his Admiſſion into the Houſe, upon any Terms; and as for the latter, I was as averſe from a too Publick Expoſure, leſt it might create Rumours in the Neighbourhood, not only ſcandalous to himſelf, but, in their Conſtruction, prejudicial to his Lordſhip, and me too: for when once Fame hath publiſhed any Relation, its Currency is not ſo much regulated by the Facts themſelves, as by the Diſpoſitions of its ſeveral Reporters; ſo that no Innocence of Parties can confine it to the Truth only; nor doth it often happen, that Propagators of Scandal are wholly exempted from its Retortion upon themſelves in the Long-run; for which Reaſons, I ordered *Stringer* to be ſecured, and reſerved for their Lord's Pleaſure, whom I expected in the Afternoon.

As for *Eſther*, though all imaginable Diligence had been employed in the Search after her, ſhe was no where to be found; nor did I ever hear what had become of her, till ſhe

ſhe afterwards appeared as my Accuſer, for the very Crime herſelf had ſo concerted with *Stringer*.

CHAP. III.

Biddy's *Meeting with Lord* G—r—d *the Fact related. By* Biddy. *By* William. Stringer *before his Lordſhip. His pathetic Speech. His Lordſhip's Generoſity.* Stringer *diſcarded.*

LORD *Richard* arriving ſomewhat ſooner than ordinary that Day, and juſt as I was called down for Dinner, I could (rather than have diſcompoſed him) have even concealed *Stringer's* ſcandalous Behaviour to me; but then the Duty I owed to his Lordſhip, on ſo important a Subject as his Wife's Reputation and Honour, and the Injury intended to himſelf, would no longer admit of his Lordſhip's harbouring in his Boſom a Creature, who, in ſo tender a Point, had meditated ſuch an Injury againſt him.

HIS Lordſhip had ever, on his firſt alighting, made whatever Room I then happened to be in, his firſt Lodgment; but being now informed that Dinner was upon the Table, and that I was then deſcending the Stairs, his firſt Stage was into the Parlour, where he might ſo ſoon expect me.

UPON my entering the Room to him, he, as his Manner was, running to embrace me, I ſunk from his Graſp upon my Knees; nor could

could I reſtrain my Eyes from Diſcharging the Iſſues of a bitter Soul at his Feet. His Lordſhip ſtarted back at the Sight; what means my Angel? ſaid he. Are you ill? Are the Children ill?

ALAS! my dear Lord, ſaid I, none of theſe things would thus have moved me. Health is the Gift of Heaven, and may be diſpenſed or retracted, at the Donor's Pleaſure; but my Heart is touched with a Senſe of Horror, ariſing from a different Spring; for ſurely nothing leſs than an infernal Agent could have premeditated an Injury, ſo nearly perfected againſt my Honour and your own Repoſe, as that I am now to relate to you.

HIS Lordſhip ſtanding aghaſt at my ſolemn Preface, and anxious for the Knowledge of that Hiſtory which was to ſucceed it; detain me no longer in ſuſpence, my dear Wife, ſaid he, but explain yourſelf.

ALAS! my dear Lord, ſaid I, Doubts conſpire to ſtart a Difficulty in my Breaſt, whether I am ſtill your Wife or not. O! my *Biddy*, replied he, proceed, and ſtretch me no longer thus upon the Torture. If, my good Lord, added I, to have ſurrendered myſelf, in naked Bed, to the Arms of another Man, can have cancelled the conjugal Obligation, I am yours no more.

DISTRACTION end me! ſaid his Lordſhip, or reveal to me this Myſtery (the Water then glittering in his Eyes) My dear Lord, ſaid I, the Torments you feel, muſt extract a Declaration from me, of what I could have wiſhed, it might have conſiſted with my Duty to you, to have conceal-

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ed; but as every Tye in Nature urges me a contrary Way, know, that the Villain, *Stringer*—— Ha! cried his Lordſhip, *Stringer!* and a Villain too! Proceed, my Love, proceed. That Villain, *Stringer*, added I, dreſſed in *Eſther's* Likeneſs, aſſumed her Place in my Bed laſt Night, I having given her leave, under a pretended Indiſpoſition, for going to bed before me.

I AM but too well ſatisfied, my dear Lord, added I, from the Tenderneſs your Lordſhip hath ever expreſſed for me, that your Breaſt is now fired, by this Report; but my Lord, that I may caſt Water upon the Flame, be aſſured, that the Arm of Providence hath protected me from his Machinationts. I then repeated to him the whole Proceſs of the Affair; but inſiſted, that if *William* had not accidentally heard me, and preſented himſelf to my Relief, it would have been impoſſible but I muſt have been overcome.

HIS Lordſhip, ſtill trembling at the Adventure, extracting his Purſe from his Pocket, clapped it into *William's* Hand; there, honeſt Fellow, ſaid he, take that, and remember, as I ever ſhall, that I ſtand Debtor to you, for all in Life that is valuable to me. Then clapping his Hand upon *William's* Shoulder, he demanded a circumſtantial Account from him, of when, and how, and what, charging him to deliver it moſt minutely.

MAY it pleaſe your Lordſhip, ſaid *William*, my hearing of my Lady was ſurely the moſt accidental Thing imaginable. Her La-

dyſhip well knows, what a tempeſtuous Night the laſt was, even beyond what I almoſt ever remember. I had but juſt fallen to ſleep, when the Wind, as I ſuppoſe, having diſplaced ſome of the Tiles juſt over me, the Water poured upon me like a Deluge; inſomuch that I was obliged to quit my Bed. I remained for ſome Time in my Chamber, till growing uneaſy at the Darkneſs of my Situation, I reſolved to go down for a Light, rather chuſing to employ myſelf there till Morning, than to ſit idle in my own Room; but I had no ſooner reached the Stairs-head, than ſuch diſmal Shrieks reached me there, from below, that I ſhuddered at the Noiſe, and became dubious whether I had beſt to proceed or not. However, the Cry continuing (leſt Murder might have been committed before I could diſcover from whence the Voice came, in caſe I was not very expeditious) I puſhed forwards at all Hazards; but how was I confounded, at paſſing my Lady's Door, to perceive it iſſuing from her Apartment.

I IMMEDIATELY called to her Ladyſhip to let me in, but was anſwered, break in, break in. I then ſet up an Outcry, and endeavoured to raiſe the Family, whilſt I ſtill kept forcing againſt the Door with my Foot; till the violent Report of my Kicks, commixed with that of my Voice, had brought all the Servants about me, when, by our united Attempts, we at length made Way through it. At my Lady's Requeſt, the Women firſt entered, for ſome Time before the Door was opened to us.

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MY Lord ſaid, he hoped we had not ſuffered the perfidious Raſcal to eſcape; when the Servants all together replied, they had not, but had kept him till his Lordſhip's Pleaſure ſhould be ſignified, how he would have him diſpoſed of.

MY Love, ſaid his Lordſhip, ſince you have received no further Injury than a ſevere Fright, my Heart is at Eaſe; but my Honour will not admit, that ſuch a Scandal to human Nature as *Stringer*, and ſuch an Indignity as has been offered by him to us both, ſhould paſs unpuniſhed; nor ought the Wretch, who has broke through all the Bands of Friendſhip, Gratitude, and moral Honeſty, to ſurvive this glaring Villainy.

THE Dread I all along had, of what would prove his Lordſhip's Sentiments, I told him, had almoſt prevailed with me for ſuffering his Eſcape, before his Lordſhip came; but that the Point was too nice, for tranſacting incautiouſly, which had determined me to detain him; but my deareſt Lord, added I, ſuffer not your Hands to be imbrued in Blood ſo deteſtable; rather let Juſtice, offended at his Crime, equally with your Lordſhip, take an Opportunity of avenging you: For ſooner or later, a Perſeverance in Deeds ſo atrocious, will bring down Vengeance on his Head, whilſt your Lordſhip's Arm ſhall remain unpolluted. It is your Lordſhip's Engagement to accord with my Requeſt, that I now preſs for; nor need you fear, ever holding yourſelf as culpable for his Diſmiſſion.

DURING all Dinner Time, his Lordſhip was ſo full of Queſtions, to me and the Servants, that he had even learned every minute Particular; but now, the Danger being paſt, and recovering his Chearfulneſs again, when they related the Manner of *Stringer*'s riſing, and dreſſing in *Eſther*'s Cloaths, their ſouſing him in the Horſepond, and his ſucceeding Sweat in the Dunghill, I thought his Lordſhip would have cracked his Sides with Laughter.

HE highly commended the juſt Chaſtiſement they had beſtowed upon him, acknowledging, that himſelf could not have adapted Puniſhments ſo adequate to his Demerits; and, my Dear, added he, ſince your Ladyſhip ſeems to dread the Effects of my Diſpleaſure to *Stringer*, reſt aſſured, that having already undergone ſo juſt Diſcipline, I ſhall only give the Raſcal the Strappado, and for ever diſcard him from my Family, and Friendſhip.

DINNER was ſcarce removed, when his Lordſhip ordered *Stringer* before him, who told his Conductors, that he could, with far more Pleaſure, have faced Death in the Horſepond, than he ſhould be able to confront his Lordſhip.

I HAD begged Leave to retreat before *Stringer* appeared, as judging it woul not be ſo prudent in me, to be preſent at his Examination, and that before the Servants too, whom his Lordſhip could not well diſmiſs from their Attendance, after the Zeal they had already ſhewn in his Service. This alſo, his Lordſhip judging no Ways improper, I

was

was by him desired to step into the next Room, from whence I might hear all that passed, and be able, if needful, to clear up any Difficulty, or contradict any false Assertion.

Stringer had no sooner beheld his Lordship, than postrating himself before his Patron, and in the most pathetic Manner declaring, that he petitioned not for Pardon; he assured his Lordship, that the Excess of his Passion for me, had impelled him to an Act, not only dissonant, but absolutely contradictory, to his clearest Reason; and that his inordinate Desires had rendered him, for the Time, actually out of his Senses, or he had never aimed at the Perpetration of so ungenerous a Fact. That he was sensible of the Heinousness of the Transaction, and of the little Confidence his Lordship could ever, for the future, find Reason to repose in him: That it was his earnest Request, his Lordship would take from him a Life so justly forfeited to his Justice, rather than to expose him, not only to the Buffetings of his own Conscience, but to the Ignominy and Contempt of all Mankind, for such an unparalelled Ingratitude, to so generous a Benefactor, as his Lordship had ever proved to him.

OBSERVING that this moving Speech had wrought tolerably upon his Lordship's humane Disposition, he strained his Voice to a still higher Pitch. Alas! my Lord, said he, hesitate not a Moment to rid the Earth of a Reptile unworthy of a Name on it. Let not your Compassion for what *Stringer* hath

been, with-hold your Hand from what he now merits from you; nor let my Crimes render me ſo contemptible in your Eye, as to reſtrain you from beſtowing the ſole Boon I durſt preſume to demand of you. I wait the merited Stroke with Impatience, which failing me, from your injured Arm, my own diſtracted Heart muſt urge me to perform. Let me therefore intreat you, Sir, as the laſt act of your Clemency, the only remaining Teſtimony of your ſtill ſubſiſting Compaſſion for me, to revenge yourſelf of this deteſted Being, to whom Life can be of no future Account, under the Complication of Miſeries your Frowns muſt introduce.

In ſhort, *Stringer*, by this Harangue, ſo mollified his Lordſhip's rigorous Sentiments of him, that inſtead of the Severities he had purpoſed to exert towards him, he commanded his Cloaths to be reſtored to him (for he was ſtill in *Eſter*'s Livery) and having firſt privately ordered an Examination into what Caſh his Pockets abcunded with, which, upon the Survey, amounted but to Three Shillings and Six-pence (it wanting but Three Days to the Quarter, whereon he would have received from his Lordſhip Fifty Pounds) with a Bank-note for that Quarterage ſlipt into his Pocket, he diſcharged him, under poſitive Injunction, never more to appear before him.

No ſooner had his Lordſhip expelled *Stringer*, than, calling me in and embracing me; my deareſt *Biddy*, ſaid he, what a World of Miſchief might have enſued, had this libidinous Man obtained his pernicious

Views?

Views? My dear Lord, replied I, had that proved the Caſe, your Lordſhip can ſcarce conceive you would now have had me to have condoled with you upon it. How ſo, my Love? returned he; you would have been no way culpable in ſubmitting to ſuperior Force and Neceſſity. Alas! my Lord! replied I, could any Superiority have prevailed with me, to have ſurvived both my own Diſcrace and your Diſhonour? No, my Lord, *Stringer* ſhould never have gained the Advantage of me, till I had ſtruggled myſelf paſt all Probability of ever reproaching him for it, I can aſſure you.

CHAP. IV.

Stringer *gets in with the Earl of* B-----n. *Perfidy to Lord* G---r---d. *Diſcovers Lord* G---r---d*'s Marriage to his Father. Lord* G---r---d *viſits his Father. Earl of* B---n *propoſes a Match to him. His Evaſion. Lord* G---r---d *denies his Marriage. His Confuſion.*

THOUGH his Lordſhip, by the Expulſion of *Stringer*, had driven out a Viper from his Intimacy, who might have been dangerous by the near Approach of his venomous Jaws; he had but converted him thereby into a Baſiliſk, whoſe Effects are more ſenſibly felt at a Diſtance: For whilſt his Lordſhip and I were enjoying ourſelves for the beſt Part of the Summer in the Country,

try, *Stringer* being deſtitute of all further Protection from his Lordſhip, was playing his Cards at *London* for his own Benefit.

His Fifty Pounds, with which his Lordſhip had diſmiſſed him, being almoſt ſunk, and no Proſpect of a further Recruit preſenting from his old Channel, he had applied his Wits for ſecuring to himſelf a freſh Stream.

He purpoſely caſt himſelf into the Way of the Earl of *B*-------*n*, with a Face collected into Chagrin, and an old thread-bare Suit of Cloaths on, wherein he made a far worſe Appearance than he had ever as yet been ſeen in by that Nobleman; inſomuch, that the old Earl, who had long been apprized of his Son's Benefactions to him, took Notice of his Dejection, and enquired, when he had laſt ſeen Lord *G---r---d?* For Mr. *Stringer*, added he, my Son has not been uſed to ſuffer his old Friend to appear in this indigent Guiſe, nor could I have expected to have ſeen you thus, whilſt my Son could have afforded you a more ſuitable Accommodation.

Stringer ſhook his Head, as ſeemingly ſmothering ſomewhat in his Breaſt, that he was unwilling to divulge; which only ſerved to ſet the Earl upon an Enquiry into what it was he meant, and what it was which had prevented the Proſecution of his Son's Kindneſs to him. The Earl put the queſtion to him; but *Stringer* replied, No, my Lord, if I am to ſuffer, let it be my Lot to ſink alone; far be it from me to betray my Friend, at leaſt into the Hands of a Father, who, ſhould his Indignation burn out

againſt him, hath it ſo amply in his Power to reſent it.

THIS Flouriſh of *Stringer's* had its affect; for now the old Earl, impatient for the ſecret Hiſtory of his Son's Proceedings, and judging that *Stringer*'s Wants would render him more ſupple than his Inclination, applied himſelf ſolely to them, by ſignifying, how well he had ever eſteemed him as a Friend and Companion of his Son; adding, that rather than he ſhould be too ſorely diſtreſſed, from any Ceſſation of his Son's Liberality to him, himſelf would allow him an hundred Pounds a-year, juſt to enable him, as a ſingle Man, to ſuſtain the Appearance of a Gentleman; for that his Father and he, in their juvenile Years, had been Fellow-club-mates, and Intimates themſelves.

Stringer returning the Earl many Thanks, aſſured him, that his Favour, extended to a Wretch like himſelf (in the generous Offer he had made him, at the very loweſt Ebb of his Fortune), would for ever attach him to his Lordſhip's Service.

MATTERS, in the Earl's Opinion, growing now fully ripe, as an Earneſt of his future Liberality, pulling out his Purſe, wherein there were at leaſt thirty Guineas, he preſented it to *Stringer*, leſt he ſhould ſtand in preſent Need of any thing; and then returning to Lord *G----r----d*, he enquired how he went on; for that ſince his Acceſſion to his Uncle's Eſtate, he had been almoſt a ſtranger in his Family. You, Mr. *Stringer*, added he, may be preſumed

to

to have known his Concerns and Management of late, though I am a ſtranger to them; for young Fellows generally diſcloſe thoſe things laſt of all to their Parents, who ought, indeed, to be the firſt Perſons their Concerns ſhould be expoſed to, as beſt able, beneficially, to adviſe them; but, indeed, it is moſtly otherwiſe.

Ah! Sir, replied *Stringer*, it muſt be a cutting Stroke to me, to be obliged to betry my old Friend's ſecrets; but the ſooner a Remedy is applied the better. I really neither know what to ſay, or even think, of his late Tranſactions: For having procured himſelf a She-friend, whether Wife or Miſtreſs, it may be difficult to ſay; but having by her a growing Family, an Houſeful of Children about him, and herſelf a teeming Woman, vain and extravagant, in the Support of whoſe Luxury, he is kept as poor as a Frier-mendicant; what a Chance then, muſt a Friend of Lord *G--r--d*'s ſtand, from her Generoſity? For nothing being ſufficient for her Ambition, not a ſingle Penny can flow from his Lordſhip but through her Hands.

Now what has diſpleaſed him from me is, added *Stringer*, the candid Advice I have given him, not to ſuffer himſelf to be thus impoſed upon; together with ſome plain Hints of her Levity, and Inconſtaney to him, and thoſe from my own Knowledge too: For would you imagine it, Sir? added he, ſhe had the Impudence, in his Lordſhip's own Houſe, to come to bed to me one Night, in the Abſence of her Huſband,

Paramour,

Paramour, or what ſhall I ſtile him? Nay, ſo frought with Deceit and Management was ſhe, that upon his Lordſhip's Return, (the Affair having taken Wind) ſhe had the Addreſs to turn the Tables upon me, in Vindication of her own Innocence; all which, the poor deluded Huſband made no more Scruple of yeilding Credit to, than to the Goſpel. O! Sir, added he, ſhe had too much Artifice, for ſo well meaning a Man as Lord *G---r---d.*

YOU confound me! replied the Earl. A Wife, ſay you, are you ſure ſhe is his Wife?----Why, Man! I had rather he ſhould keep a Dozen Whores, than have one Wife, unleſs of my own procuring. But pray, what Fortune, and of what Family is the Lady? Why, here again, my Lord, ſaid *Stringer*, your Goodneſs muſt excuſe the Expoſure of my Friend's Folly.---Who is ſhe? Who is ſhe? Good Mr. *Stringer*, ſaid the Earl, with ſome Impatience. Your Lordſhip knows her, ſaid he.---Dear Mr. *Stringer*, without more ado, name her, ſaid the Earl. I am really almoſt aſhamed, replyed *Stringer*, to inform you Honour, that it is your late Lady's Maid, *Biddy Farmer.*

UNDONE! ſaid the Earl.--- *Biddy* a Lady! ---*Biddy* my Daughter! ---But there are Hopes, ſtill.---She can but be his Miſtreſs, and then all will be well: For between you and me, Mr. *Stringer*, I am at this Time treating for a Marriage with Lady *Mary C---n---d* for him; and a vaſt fortune ſhe is.---Nay, Preliminaries are within another Meeting of being adjuſted on both Sides;

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ſo that as I ſaid before, I hope there is no Marriage between them, and then, a Piece of Money will patch her up for ſome needy Fellow, who will gladly ſnap at his Lordſhip's Leavings, for the ſake of the ready Caſh.

HERE, *Stringer* interpoſed with his Advice to the Earl, not to be too ſanguine in his Hopes, leſt (as he feared it would prove) Lord *G---r---d* was already incapacitated for any Match he might provide for him: For that, if his Information was true, I was actually his Wife, and vouched for his Author, my late Maid *Eſther*, who, as he informed the Earl, knew much more of the Matter than himſelf.

THIS ſet the Earl into a moſt violent Paſſion, nor could *Stringer* by any Means pacify him, but by producing *Eſther*, to avouch her Knowledge in the Affair.

MR. *Stringer* and *Eſther*, as was moſt probable, from what hath before been ſaid, were no great Strangers to each other, for the very next Day he produced her, when ſhe, by ſeveral Circumſtances, corroborated the Fact of the Marriage, as that I went by his Name, was called my Lady, wore a Wedding-Ring, and that ſhe had often heard Lord *G---r---d*, in ſpeaking of me, ſtile me his Wife, and me at Times, ſtile him my Huſband; nor had ſhe ever heard it ſuſpected, either in our own Family, or elſewhere, that we were other than Man and Wife.

ALL this being ſo plainly made out, the Earl ſwore if it ſhould prove true, that he would

would disinherit his Son, and cut him off from every Expectation of his Estate. Then recommending it to each of them, to redouble their Diligence, for reducing the Affair to an absolute Certainty one Way or other, he promised them ample Gratification for their Pains.

THE Earl might have saved both himself, and his Agents much Trouble, had he but patiently waited a Day or two longer; for in that Time, Lord *G---r---d* paid his Father a Visit. He perceived an unusual Coolness in the Earl, upon his first Approach to his Presence; but had not the least Suspicion from whence it proceeded, till after a short Pause on both Sides; Son, said the Earl, I am treating of a Match for you, and as my Children by my second Lady, must have a Provision out of my Estate, I am desirous of conjoining you to the Daughter of a noble Lord, my very good Friend, whose ample Fortune, will in a great Measure compensate, for what will be drawn from you by the younger Branches of my Family.

LORD *G---r---d* was so abashed at this Intelligence, that he was unable to reply to it; when his Father again put it to him, how he liked Lady *Mary C---d---n?* His Lordship answered, that she was certainly a most deserving Lady, but that having at present, not the least Thoughts of making any Alteration in his Way of Life, he hoped his Father would give himself no further Trouble upon his Account. That his constant Prayers were for the Earl's Life, to enjoy what he had; and that whenever his Circumstances should

be run out, whatever he ſhould be pleaſed to aſſign him, would be ſufficient for his every Purpoſe, without incumbering himſelf at preſent in the Marriage-ſtate; for that he could not as yet ſay, when he might be inclined to Matrimony.

SON! Son! ſaid the Earl, looking very ſternly, caſt no Duſt in my Eyes. This Corn is too light to decoy old Birds with. Come, come, explain to me.----Who have you with you at you Seat in *Hertfordſhire?* My dear Lord was ready to ſink into the Earth, at this ſo ſudden, and unexpected Puſh, nor dared he to make the leaſt Reply to a Father, the Rigor of whoſe Severity he had ever ſo much dreaded, and on former Occaſions. had ſo often felt.

WHAT! ſaid the Earl, have you no Anſwer ready for me? Let me have no Palliations, tell me the naked Truth. What Woman, I ſay, is it, that you keep in *Hertfordſhire?* His Lordſhip being ſenſible, there could be no Room for Evaſion of a Fact, which moſt probably, his Father was no leſs apprized of, than himſelf, replied, that ſhe was his Wife. Raſcal! ſaid the Earl, tell me truly, that ſhe is your Whore, and all is well: For let me hear but the Name of a Wife, and I ſhall from henceforth diſclaim all manner of Relationſhip to you.

HIS Lordſhip, well nigh terrified to death, at the Fury which had ſpread itſelf over his Father's Countenance; but hoping to mitigate his Paſſion, by a Compliance with what he perceived to be ſo much his Inclination, begg'd Pardon for the Untruth he had raſh-

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ly been guilty of; but added, that his Paſſion prevailing, for perſuading a late Servant of his Honor's to ſubmit to his Embraces, he had ever ſince found her ſo agreeable to him, that he had ſtill retained her to himſelf.

WELL! well! Lord *G---r---d*, replied the Earl, I am glad to hear it is no worſe.---- Young Fellows will be amorous.----Nature muſt be aſſiſted.---And ſince you have behaved with Diſcretion, theſe Sallies muſt be paſſed over;---but, do you hear, part with her, ---part with her forthwith, and as I am informed, you have Children by her, either give her a Sum of Money to take them off your Hands at once, or ſettle ſome little Matter upon them. I'll take care to make it up to you, upon your Marriage: For I would have all clear and eaſy, on the Introduction of your Lady.---Be with me at Dinner To-morrow, and you ſhall pay Lady *Mary* you firſt Viſit in the Afternoon, whilſt her Father and I finiſh the Treaty we have been upon.

HIS Lordſhip, who during his Father's Harrangue, had been ſtudying what to reply; begg'd to be excuſed from his Attendance upon the Lady the next Day, having appointed Buſineſs of the utmoſt Conſequence, for that Time, which he could no Ways diſappoint, but aſſured the Earl, that he would ſoon take an Opportunity of waiting upon him for that Purpoſe.

TELL me of no Engagements, ſaid his Father; you can have none of equal Conſequence, either to your ſelf or me, with the Match I have propoſed to you. None of

your Put-offs therefore, I do inſiſt upon your dining with me, and then making the Viſit.

LORD *G---r---d* then perceiving, that all he could urge towards a Delay would prove ineffectual, ſeemingly conſented to obey, and took his Leave.

CHAP. V.

Reflections upon Vice. Biddy *conſents to Lord* G---r----d's *denying his Marriage to her. Reaſons of Lord* G---r---d's *Condeſcenſion to the Earl his Father.* Biddy *quits his Lordſhip's Seat. Lord* G---r---d's *Letter to her after his firſt Viſit to Lady* Mary. *A Mock-courtſhip. Match broken off.*

SURELY, did Mankind but deliberately conſider the Conſequences attendant on one vicious Action, not all the Gratifications upon Earth would ever bias them to the commiſſion of it.

NEVER was any Man more experimentally ſenſible of this than my dear Lord, when ſeriouſly reflecting on the Falſity he had been guilty of to his Father, he beheld the Train of Miſeries, which, ſtep by ſtep, ſucceeding each other, had all been ſuperinduced by that one groſs Lie, he had thought to have ſheltered himſelf under, from the inſtant Wrath of an incenſed Parent, at the time he declared me to have been only his Miſtreſs, and not his lawful Wife.

HE left the Earl under the moſt pungent Concern at his Command for attending him to Lord *C---d----n*'s as the next Day. He returned to his Lodgings, threw himſelf on his Bed, where he paſſed the Night in the greateſt Agonies, till Morning. He reſolved not to meet his Father, according to Appointment, nor to ſubject himſelf to the Conſequences of that deteſted Interview with Lady *Mary*.---What had he done!--how had he involved himſelf in inextricable Difficulties (would he ſay) by that one fallacious Article of denying his Marriage with me, which, ſooner or later, muſt prove him a Liar!---- He aroſe, wrote to his Father, read the Letter, and immediately burnt it.--The Thoughts of me, and of his deareſt Children, each of us more precious to him than his own Heart's Blood, diſtreſſed him to the laſt Degree.--- He reſolved to publiſh his Marriage to his Father; but with what Face could he now deny what he had ſo lately aſſerted as a Verity! and how could he proceed, upon the falſe Grounds he had publiſhed to him! nor could he ever hope for a Relaxation of his Father's Anger, upon a Retraction of his late Declaration to him.

HE formed but too true a Judgment upon the Earl's implacable Temper, to hope for any Return of his Favour, after a Diſcloſure of the groſs Impoſition he had put upon him; and dared not, after the Commiſſion of ſuch a Fraud, to appear again in his Preſence; but, ſtill uncertain how to behave, he ordered the Chariot, and drove down to me.

It is ſcarce credible, what an Alteration a few Days, I may ſay a few Hours, had occaſioned in his Lordſhip; and he did not, in the leaſt, aim at concealing his Diſcompoſure from me; but ſtalking into my Dreſſing-room, more like a Spectre than a living Man, he fell upon my Neck, and during a long Silence, profuſely laviſhed forth his Tears into my Boſom; whilſt I, wild with Confuſion, urged him, for Heaven's ſake, to an Explanation.

His Heart was yet too full, and his whole Frame too much agitated to reply, ſave with the bittereſt Sighs and Groanings; till by now and then a broken Sentence, I could perceive his Strugglings were on my Account. This ſtill heightening my Curioſity for the Cauſe, I grew almoſt Frantick, till he ſhould be able wholly to diſburthen himſelf before me; then, claſping him in my Arms; O! my deareſt Lord! my Life! my Huſband, ſaid I, either explicate the Occaſion of your Sorrows, to me, or plunge your Sword into the deteſted Breaſt, which hath created you all this Woe; rid me from the World, and from the moſt painful State of Uncertainty, your Griefs have thrown me into, and under which, it will be impoſſible for me, long to ſubſiſt.

Be it what it will, my dear Lord, added I, ſo that it is not any Error or Miſconduct of mine, that hath thus reduced you, I ſhall reſt content, if I may but be permitted to ſhare the Burden with you; but, my Lord, your ſilent Tears, torture my very Soul to Diſtraction: For leaving me nothing to hope, they fill me

me with every Dread, that can poſſibly torment the human Mind. Speak! ſpeak then, my good Lord, pour all your Troubles into my Breaſt, and there, whatever Griefs they may demand, let me ſuſtain them.

His Lordſhip, having by this Time conquered the firſt Struggles of his Paſſions, O *Biddy!* ſaid he, how ſhall I ever more behold thy Face, after the Abuſe I have put upon thee! He then flooded me again with his Tears. It cannot be, my dear Lord, ſaid I, that you have abuſed me, or be it ſo, I remit it all.—I am ſatisfied you wrong yourſelf. Nay, what Injury can you poſſibly have done, equivalent to theſe Tears, to me, who live but for you.—Say, that you have wronged my Bed; I am ſure it was through Inadvertency, or by Surprize, and I can ſtill forgive it, from my Heart forgive it; but let not my dear Lord overwhelm himſelf with Grief, upon my Account.

No, *Biddy*, ſaid his Lordſhip, that never could have proved my Caſe. No, my Love, my Trouble ſprings from a want of Truth and Fidelity to thee. Tell me then, my deareſt Lord, demanded I, what it is you would further diſcloſe to me? O! *Biddy*, ſaid he, I have, before my Father, denied you to be my Wife.

I AM too well convinced, ſaid I, of your Lordſhip's Affection for me, to imagine that any Thing, leſs than the moſt forcible Neceſſity, could have prevailed with your Lordſhip for ſuch a Declaration; nor can that, or ought conjoined to it, unſettle the juſt Eſteem I muſt ever bear for your Lordſhip,

ſhip, whilſt I can be perſuaded of my preſent Station in your Lordſhip's Breaſt. Nay, my good Lord, added I, ſo wholly am I yours, both in Will and Affection, that, believe me, if to rank again in my former Station, would in the leaſt but contribute to your Peace, you might command me freely, and meet with an implicit Obedience from me; let but your Love accompany my Calling: For as without this, the ſublimeſt Pomp this Earth affords, would but prove a worthleſs Impoſition on me; ſo with it, no poſſible Depreſſion of Fortune, can afford me the leaſt Diſquiet.

I DESIRED his Lordſhip to inform me, how it came to paſs, that I ſhould be introduced as a Topic of their Diſcourſe at his Father's? His Lordſhip then acquainted me with all that had paſſed between his Father and him, relative to his Marriage with Lady *Mary C—d—n*, and by what Means he had been induced ſo far to falſify, as to deny his Affiance with me.

MY dear Lord ſuffered ſo much, during this Relation, as moved me prodigiouſly; when, intreating me not to weep, he begged my Pardon for his Error; but it was the laſt of its kind he would ever be guilty of; for that his cool Reflection had determined him to break through, not only the Ties of filial Duty, but every more intereſting Obligation, rather than to ſubmit to the Horrors he had ever ſince been haunted with.

PARDON me! my Lord, ſaid I, theſe Tears flow not for myſelf (for I wept abundantly) but from a Senſe of the Sufferings you muſt have

have endured, at being compelled to vitiate the Character of one ſo dear to you, as I hope I have ever been, and ſhall never ceaſe to be.

AFTER tedious Debate upon the Subject, our Reſolves, at length, all centered in this, that his Lordſhip (with all due Submiſſion) ſhould write to the Earl, by way of Excuſe for not meeting him, till he was aſſured whether he could diſpoſe of me without Tumult or Diſturbance: For that, ſhould any Queſtions be demanded of him by Lady *Mary*'s Friends concerning me, be choſe to have it abſolutely in his own Power, to deny my having any further Dependance upon him; ſo that, ſo ſoon, as Things were ſettled, he would pay his Duty to his Lordſhip.

THIS, my Reader will ſay, was a very odd Scheme for me to have come into; yet the chief Contrivance of it was my own: For what would I not have done, what would I not have ſubmitted to, that might but have reſcued that dear Man from a Moment's Diſquiet, whoſe Soul was wrapt up in me and my little Infants?

WE little conſidered with ourſelves, when we had formed this Device, that it could prove no other than a patched-up Truce between the Earl and us, which might, probably, procure to Father and Son ſome few more friendly Meetings; but then, we penetrated not into the Succeſſion of thoſe dark Conſequences which were to enſue; nor though we acted upon this wild Principle, had each of us a Diſtruſt of the other's Integrity; for could that have for a Moment

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ſubſiſted between us, we had never left it in the Power of either of us to have diſtreſſed the other, or the Earl himſelf to have diſtreſſed us both.

THE Earl's Honour muſt, of Neceſſity, deſcend upon my Huſband, but without his Eſtate too, which was very conſiderable, what his Lordſhip was in Poſſeſſion of, excluſive of his Father's annual Bounty, amounted to but little more than Three Thouſand a-year; too ſcanty a Pittance to attend the Dignity: So that it was the Proſpect of his Father's Eſtate, or at leaſt a good Part of it, that had kept his Lordſhip in ſuch a ſervile Dependance upon him; for though his Lordſhip had often, with great Sincerity, wiſhed himſelf but a private Gentleman, in which Sphere his then Income would have anſwered his every View in Life; yet his Lordſhip had a Spirit, which would not eaſily acquieſce under the Title of an Earl, devoid of an Eſtate ſuitable for the Support of that Dignity.

IT may be wondered at, perhaps, that his Lordſhip ſhould not have been intitled to any Eſtate at his Father's Death, in conſequence of any Settlement upon his Mother (whoſe Fortune I have before mentioned to have been very large) his Lordſhip, being her only Child; but I muſt inform my Reader, that ſhe being, within few Months, of Age at his Father's Marriage with her, and her Fortune being wholly in her own Hands, the Earl had ſo wrought upon the Lady to expedite their Marriage, that the Settlement was deferred till her Arrival at the Age of twenty-one;

one; but before it could be perfected, ſhe dying in Childbirth of his Lordſhip, he was left wholly dependant on his Father.

WE now made all the Preparations poſſible for my quitting his Lordſhip's Seat, with my Children, for a Retirement that he had provided for me about ten Miles farther in the Country; nor did his Lordſhip delay waiting upon his Father, for a longer Space, than the Neceſſity of the Caſe might ſeem to require; but his Lordſhip's main View was, by ſtarting frequent Objections, to protract Time ſo, that poſſibly, his Father might die before Matters ſhould be puſhed to ſuch Extremity, as to compel him to adhere to my Marriage, which he had reſerved as his laſt Reſort.

I WAS as well ſituated with my Children, in my new Habitation, as I could have wiſhed, under ſo great a Privation of my Huſband's Society as then threatened me; but his Lordſhip's daily Vexation at parting with me (freſh Accounts of which he each Poſt tranſmitted to me) blunted the Edge of every flattering Idea, and kept me under far more Diſquietudes for his Sake than my own.

HIS Lordſhip, by Letter, gave me account of his firſt Interview with Lady *Mary*, ſo pleaſantly, that, for my Readers Satisfaction, I ſhall hereto ſubjoin it in his own Words.

My ever Dear Biddy,

YOU may, with far more Facility guess at, than I can deſcribe, the Violence I am obliged to offer to my Nature, whilſt engaged

gaged in ſo diſagreeable a Purſuit, as I am here enliſted into.

I YESTERDAY paid my firſt Viſit to Lady *Mary*, accompanied with my Father; when, after about half an Hour ſpent by us in her's and her Father's Company, his Lordſhip taking my Father out of the Room with him, undoubtedly propoſed thereby, to give me an Opportunity of paying my Addreſſes to that Lady.

I CANNOT ſay, but had I been diſengaged, or had I never known you, my Dear, that there could have happened any Thing in the leaſt unpleaſing, to a Man of nicer Taſte than I am, in Lady *Mary*'s Company, who is undoubtedly as accompliſhed as the Sex can well admit of; but with what Spirit was it poſſible for me to exert the Talents of a Lover, to any other than my beloved *Biddy?* Had I addreſſed the Woman, it muſt have been directed to thee, in her, none other being capable of inſpiring that Paſſion in my Breaſt than thy deareſt Self; but ſomewhat muſt be ſaid, and ſo it was; for after a full fifteen Minutes Silence, I blundered out, in an aukward Manner, the Bleſſings attainable in the Marriage-ſtate, between ſuch as made Love the chief Motive of their uniting in it.

I PRESENTLY perceived I had overſhot the Mark, or could I conceive her ſuch a Fool, as to believe the Motive mine, when our two Fathers had ſo long been adjuſting the Articles, as to have well nigh brought them to Concluſion, before I had ever apprized her of my Sentiments, or had received the

the leaſt Return from her; and indeed, I received a moſt pertinent Anſwer from her; in a Confeſſion, that it probably might be as I gueſſed; but having given herſelf no Trouble hitherto, in the Diſquiſition of ſuch Affairs, ſhe could not reply from any prior Surmiſes of her own, upon the Subject.

HAD I but poſſeſſed the leaſt Fragment of Love, or could I but have aſſumed a Gaiety of Temper to have perſonated the Lover at that Time, I ſhould ſoon have been inſpired with a ready Reply to her Anſwer; and tho' of no material Conſequence, our Converſation might have been kept up, till their Lordſhips had again entered to our Relief; but I became ſo ſhocked at all Thoughts of raiſing Expectations in her, which my own Heart would condemn me for, that turning the Diſcourſe to meer Matters of Indifference, the Monoſyllable, Love, or ought elſe to be deduced from it, was not ſo much as once more hinted at between us.

I MUST do the Lady the Juſtice to ſay, that ſhe ſupported my Indifference with a perfect Reſignation, conſidering it proved what ſhe could by no Means have expected, from the Preparation ſhe had undoubtedly made to have received me as a Suitor; however, before we were both run aground, for want of farther Subjects to have proceeded upon, our Fathers preſented themſelves before us, in little Doubt, I preſume, of our having made a fair Beginning.

OUR Viſit was now ſoon ended, and my Father aſſured me, as we returned home, that he having adjuſted all Matters with Lord

C--d--n, it would be needleſs in us Young-ones to make a tedious Affair of it, and therefore recommended to me, the puſhing our Courtſhip to a Concluſion as ſoon as poſſible.

He would fain have been let into the Particulars of my Requeſts, and her Anſwers, with all that had paſſed between us; but I replied, that our Words being directed by the Suggeſtions of our Mind, upon occaſional Circumſtances, as they accidentally aroſe, it was impoſſible for me to repeat them.

I begin to have a far more indifferent Notion of this Artifice than ever I had, and as my Father inſiſts upon my ſeeing her again To-morrow, and ſo every other Day, I muſt throw all at Hazard, rather than totally deprive myſelf of You and my dear Children, one Moment with whom, out-weighs an Age with all the World beſides, in the Eſteem of.

Your moſt affectionate Huſband,

R---D G--R---D.

I shall not take upon me to tranſcribe ſeveral other of his Lordſhip's Letters, on the Subject; but I from them collected, that Lady *Mary*'s Father had complained to the Earl, of the Coolneſs of his Son's Behaviour to that Lady, which the Earl excuſed, as much as poſſible, from Lord *G--r--d*'s Baſhfulneſs; but as his Affections, he was certain, were fully ſettled upon the young Lady, he doubted not, but as he grew to greater Intimacy with her, he would be more ſanguine in his Addreſſes.

His

HIS Lordſhip paying his Viſits regularly, by Compulſion of his Father, without the leaſt further Progreſs in the Affair on his Part; the old Gentleman, he told me, had prepared the Settlement, and appointed a Day for the Ceremony, which his Lordſhip, on pretence of ſome Failure in the Deeds, had cauſed to be put off, more than once or twice; till at length, grown quite weary of the Mock Scene, without Proſpect of coming off at laſt with Honour, he reſolved to proceed no longer, in a Courſe ſo oppoſite to his Inclination; and now, nothing offering to prevent their Marriage at an appointed Day, my dear Lord ſummoned up his Courage, to acquaint Lord *C---d---n* of his former Marriage, and that the Courtſhip he had carried on with Lady *Mary*, had been entirely under Compulſion of his Father, whoſe fiery Nature, had hitherto obliged him to conceal the real Truth; and then intreating his Lordſhip's Pardon, he begged him to find ſome Means of diſſolving the Treaty, and that, if poſſible, without endangering his Lordſhip's future Proſpect with his Father.

LORD *C—d—n*, he ſent me Word, ſtood as one Thunder-ſtruck at his Report, acknowledging his Lordſhip's Juſtice, in revealing the Truth, before Conſummation, but blamed him exceedingly, for having ſuffered it to proceed ſo far firſt; and finally, forbad him his Houſe for the Time to come.

THE Ice being now broken, and my dear Lord not daring to face his Father again, he fled forthwith into the Country to me; but under ſuch Confuſion of Mind, as nothing

that I could ſay or do would diſſipate: For tho' his Affection for me was invariable, and would break through every Weight that oppreſſed him; yet the Anguiſh of my Mind, was no leſs than his own, for ſeveral Days that we had now been together: But our Union had not been of above ten Days Continuance, before we were rouſed by a moſt unexpected Viſitant, who alone claimed every Part of our Attention.

CHAP. VI.

Interview of Lord G---r---d *and his Father with* Biddy. *Denies his Marriage to* Biddy *through Fear.* Biddy *to be turned off. Charged with Breach of Faith to Lord* G--r--d. *He clears it.*

AS his Lordſhip and I were walking Arm in Arm in our Garden one Day, and ſeriouſly debating upon paſt Occurrences, one of our Servants running to us, informed us that a Coach and Six was arrived at the Gate. We immediately gave Orders for ſhewing the Company in, and we would wait on them preſently; but turning ſhort to receive them who ſhould be labouring up to meet us, but the Earl of *B--n*.

THE Sight of his Lordſhips ſo near us, pierced like a Sword through us both; but as it was then too late to fly, we mended our Pace to receive him.

His

HIS Zeal, for engaging us without a Moment's Loſs of Time, was ſo great, as to have ſpurred him forwards with ſuch Celerity in his Motion, that being a very corpulent Man, and Ptiſical, his Lungs wrought ſo by the Time he met us, as not to ſuffer him to adjuſt his Words to a ſpeechable Medium, ſo that we were wholly at a Loſs for his Errand for a full Quarter of an Hour, moſt of which Time Lord *G—r—d* and I, had been upon our Knees, in Hopes of receiving his Bleſſing; but though the old Gentleman had ſeveral Times made Eſſays for uttering his Mind to us, yet, being unable to utter forth more than a Syllable at once, and that moſt unintelligibly, we had not yet been enabled to gueſs, whether his Intent had amounted to a Curſe, or a Bleſſing; though if any Credit might have been given to the Language of his Eye, the only legible Part of his Countenance; for his Cheeks, Mouth, and Noſtrils, wrought like a Smith's Bellows, in one Key all the while, we both dreaded the former.

AT length, perceiving us ſtill to be kneeling before him like Statues, he, by two or three haſty Elevations of his Hand, ſignified to us his Command to riſe. We obeyed, and Lord *G—r—d* perceiving his Father in ſuch an Agony ſtill, and well knowing that it was but with Difficulty that he could retain his Legs for any longer Seaſon, he ran for a Wooden-ſtool, which ſtood in a Summer-houſe at the farther End of the Walk, for him to ſit on.

I, WHO was not apprized of his Lordſhip's Intent in making off ſo faſt, being left alone with the Earl, was almoſt beſide myſelf, leſt his Lordſhip ſhould have meditated a more diſtant Trip; and the more ſo, when in his Abſence, finding the old Gentleman ſcarce able to ſtand, I running to ſupport him, was ſpurned from him with the utmoſt Indignation, and his great Crutch-headed Cane brandiſhed at my Head.

HIS Lordſhip was now returned with the Stool, upon which his Father ſoon ſeated himſelf when his Vigour by Degrees returning; What? ſaid he, young Man, am I to be made your Dupe? your Tool? your Make-game? Raſcal, added he, how dared you to ſet me to Match-making for you, when you knew yourſelf already Married?---Married! did I ſay, it cannot be that thou art married! Sirrah! thou canſt not be married to that falſe, intriguing Gypſey.——What ſhall it be ſaid that a Deſcendant of Lord *B---n*, who might have been preſumed to have inherited his mental Qualifications, hath been tricked into Matrimony, by a deſigning, wheedling Strumpet, who has outſtripped him in Artifice.

WHAT have I been doing all my Life-time? Curtailing my reaſonable Enjoyments, and diminiſhing the Figure I might have made in the World, and by every Means ſcraping Riches together, and all to have left ſuch a mean ſpirited Scoundrel a Support to his undeſerved Title.---But, Wretch! I'll leave you naked, as I firſt received you from your Mother, and let your beggarly Title deſcend to this

this Creature's Baſtards, if it will; for lawful Iſſue they can never be, begotten againſt all Senſe, Reaſon, Decency, and the Will of your Parent.

THE old Gentleman having run himſelf out of Breath in his firſt Heat, and panting moſt enormouſly, till he had recovered his Wind again; at length, began ſomewhat more moderately in his ſecond Courſe, whilſt his Lordſhip and I were withdrawn almoſt behind him; till calling to his Lordſhip, Son, ſaid he, (though this, perhaps, may be the laſt Time of my ever calling you ſo) come forward, nor ſuffer that deceitful Woman's Inſinuations to weigh out in the Anſwer you ſhall make to the Demand I ſhall offer to you. I aſk you ſeriouſly, therefore anſwer me ſolemnly; you have told me you are not married to her, and till ſhe again beguiled you with her Flatteries, perſiſted in it, and then you again confirmed it to Lord *C--d--n* that you was. I ſay, I demand a peremptory Anſwer from you, are you married, or are you not?

LORD *G---x---d*, looking down, as pauſing upon what Anſwer he ſhould return, I, who ſtood oppoſite to him, and ſo far behind his Father as not to be diſcerned by him, made every Sign I could invent, to engage his Lordſhip to a Denial (for the dreadful Sentence of never more calling him Son, had made a deep Impreſſion on us both) which his Lordſhip perceiving, and himſelf alſo concluding it would prove the ſole Means of averting his threatened Ruin, with a faultering Accent replied, that he was not.

CAN

CAN I credit this? ſaid the old Gentleman. You may, Sir, replied his Lordſhip. Then calling over his Shoulder to me, Hark ye, Madam, ſaid he, come forward, and anſwer me (though I doubt not of finding you in a contrary Note) do you look upon yourſelf to be Lord *G---r---d*'s Wife? So far as Promiſes, and mutual Engagements of the moſt ſacred Fidelity to each other, can render me, I do, Sir, replied I.

TELL me of none of your Fidelities and Engagements, ſaid he; my Son has perſiſted too long in an Error already, and high Time it is that he ſhould now rectify it: Therefore, Madam, do you hear me, take notice, that from this Day forward you muſt look out for a new Keeper. My Son has done with you; and ſince he knows not how to behave himſelf at Liberty, I ſhall take him home with me, and keep him under my own Hand.—What Breed of Baſtards is there between you? I replied, that I had four Children. Very well! ſaid he, they muſt not ſtarve; take notice, my Son ſhall leave you all the Furniture of this Houſe, make the moſt of it for your Subſiſtence, ſend the Brats all to Service as they grow up, they'll ſoon earn their Bread, and yourſelf may get into freſh Keeping under ſome other Coxcomb; then think yourſelf very well off.

MY Tears were, under Difficulty, reſtrained within their Sluices, at this ignominious Treatment of myſelf, and the pretty Infants; though I ſmothered them as much as poſſible, leſt they ſhould augment Lord *G---r---d*'s Pain; but the Earl obſerving me juſt ready for

for a Diſcharge; what would the Woman have more ſaid he; are you uneaſy that the Cart's Tail ſhould be omitted out of your Sentence? Which, in good Truth, but for my Son's ſake, would have been a moſt deſerved Portion of it.

MAY it pleaſe your Lordſhip, ſaid I, Lord *G — r — d* hath hitherto proved a Man of too much Honour to have had a Thought of abandoning me, and four poor harmleſs Babes, under the ſcanty Maintainance your Lordſhip would propoſe for us. His Lordſhip doubts not but the Children are his own, and if ſo, they are your Grand-children; then, ſuppoſe we are not married, yet thoſe Innocents deſcending from you, muſt ſurely claim ſome little Title to your Regard, above a Deſertion to Want and Penury.

AYE, aye, ſaid the Earl, it is what I expected; a virtuous Woman, no doubt, and the Children all my Son's, and my Deſcendants no queſtion; but who, think you, in their right Wits, will give credit to what a Proſtitute will ſay?

MY Lord, anſwered I, whatever Cenſure you may judge my Actions liable to, I'll appeal to your Son for my Fidelity to him; if ever I have ſtrayed, either in Thought, Action, or Inclination, from the pureſt Faith to Lord *G----r----d*, let me meet no Favour from either of you. No, my Lord, whatever Reproaches your Honour may load me with, I am aſſured they can meet with no Countenance from your Son.

VILE Hypocrite! deluding Syren! ſaid the Earl; that may paſs on him but never will

on

on me, I'll promiſe you, who am better appriſed of your Tranſactions than he is. With what an hardened Impudence can you deny your Amours with other Men, and thoſe whilſt in my Son's Keeping too? neither by Chance, Surprize, or Accident, but voluntarily and premeditately, even to the ſeducing them, and proſtituting yourſelf to them, unſollicited.

THIS Charge, rouſing my Spirits to a moſt exalted Pitch, leſt Lord *G—r—d* ſhould be induced to afford the leaſt Ear to it, I replied, that if his Honour intended that Scandal only to render me more odious to his Son, I could forgive it; but if he ſpake but with the leaſt Notion of receiving it himſelf as a Verity, I deſpiſed his Menaces, and defied either himſelf or any Man elſe, to charge me culpably with it; nor could I have imagined, that through Rancour againſt me, he could have ſubmitted to the broaching of ſo palpable a Falſity, which muſt put him to the Bluſh, for want of the leaſt Colour to ſupport it.

THE Vehemence I ſpoke with, and the Reflection it carried with it, ſo nettled the old Gentleman, that, come, ſaid he, ſince nothing but downright Fact will content you, I ſhall inſtance in one Perſon, moſt flagrantly; and ſhould you be ſo daring to deny it, he ſhall vouch it to your Face.

I VERILY believe, the whole Blood of my Body was then collected into my Cheeks; for they burnt like Fire at the Apprehenſion of what Lord *G—r—d* might think of this: When bruſhing up to the old Gentleman moſt

moſt intrepidly, I have heretofore, Sir, ſaid I, eſteemed you a Man of too much Honour, to aſſert as a Fact, what all the World cannot demonſtrate; but pardon me if I now ſuſpend my Opinion of you, till you name the Perſon, from the leaſt Crime with whom, be he who he will, if I cannot clear myſelf to your own Satisfaction, may I be turned out a wandering Vagabond upon the Face of the Earth, unworthy of the Pity or Regard of the honeſt Part of the Creation. I defy you, Sir, I defy you.

PRAY, Madam, ſaid the Earl, will it offend, ſhould I enquire whether you are not acquainted with one Mr. *Stringer?* I have been, ſaid I.———A Villain! ſaid Lord *G—r—d.* —How Son! cried the Earl, before you hear what I have to ſay of him. Sir, replied my dear Lord, I have too much to ſay of him myſelf, to imagine your Lordſhip may not have more; but I'll forfeit my Life, if, with Juſtice, you can alledge any thing good of *Stringer.*

MAY I be bold, Sir, ſaid I, to aſk what of Mr. *Stringer?* Nay, Madam, replied he, only I have heard that he has been an intimate Acquaintance of yours, and that you have been inclined to admit him to private Familiarities, ſuch as became not that ſtrict Fidelity to my Son, which you ſo much boaſt of. I admit him to Familiarities? ſaid I. Only as your Bedfellow, or ſo, added the Earl, that is all, and pray, why may not my Deſcendants (as you idly call them) be the Deſcendants of Mr. *Stringer,* with equal Certitude as mine?

LORD

LORD *G---r---d* was too far irritated, any longer to contain himſelf. My Lord, ſaid he, you have ſuffered yourſelf to have been groſsly impoſed upon, in the Concluſion you would deduce from a Fact that I muſt admit to be true; but, that every one may receive their juſt Due, give me leave to crave your Lordſhip's Patience for a few Words.

YOURSELF, Sir, are not uninformed of the Regard I have ever borne to Mr. *Stringer*, even from my Childhood. Your Lordſhip knows he hath been my Boſom Companion, and that his ſole Support for many Years, has depended upon my Bounty. I have never twice heard *Stringer* in want of what lay in my Power to ſupply, though I have more than once been ſenſible of the Loſs of thoſe Donations I have beſtowed on him. In ſhort, Sir, there is not that Thing to be named, which might have engaged a grateful Heart, but Mr. *Stringer* muſt acknowledge himſelf my Debtor for.

THIS Man, my Lord, or rather Brute; my Friend, my ſecond-ſelf, no ways doubting this Lady to be my lawful Wife, during the Entertainment that I gave him in my Family, plotted her Deſtruction; and combining with her Servant, procured her Dreſs, and taking her Place in my Bed, in my Abſence, this Lady as your Lordſhip hath obſerved, went to Bed to him.——But how, my Lord? Not in Vice and Wantonneſs, but through the Perfidy of her Woman, who, in my Abſence, ever took my Place in this Lady's Bed, and, at this Time, pretending Illneſs, deſired leave to go to reſt before her, when

when, in her own Form, ſhe placed *Stringer* there in her ſtead.

Now, my Lord, conſider how this Lady could, in that caſe, be eſteemed culpable. Surely! by no means: But let me beg your Lordſhip's Ear, whilſt I rehearſe the Conſequence of this Impoſture.

No ſooner had this Lady diſcovered the Fraud, than ſhe raiſed the Family; cauſed the Villain to be apprehended, and dreſſing him in the Maid's Clothes, firſt had him dragged through the Horſepond, then buried in the Dunghill, and laſtly, confined to the Stable with my Dogs and Horſes, till I returned from *London*; when he confeſſed his Crime, diſclaimed all further Title to my Friendſhip, and even to Virtue and Honor; nay, intreated me rather to ſtab him, than deliver him alive to ſuch Wretchedneſs, as he muſt ever after be abandoned to.

I MAKE but little Queſtion, that by this Time, your Lordſhip is perſuaded, added my dear Huſband, that the Treatment *Stringer* met with from this Lady, if ſhe valued him, as your Lordſhip would intimate, was the moſt extraordinary Method of expreſſing her Affection, that you have ever heard of: But this, my Lord, for the latter Part of it, myſelf can avow, and can bring every Soul in my Family, to teſtify all the reſt. Now, though your Lordſhip retains but an indifferent Opinihn of this Lady's Honour; yet, common Juſtice requires, that none ſhould ſuffer, from an Imputation not their due.

THE Earl, by this Time beginning to ſuſpect *Stringer* for a Knave, and perceiving that

Lord *G--r--d* was proceeding to reſume the Diſcourſe, deſired that he might walk into the Houſe, for that he ſhould be glad of a Glaſs of Wine after his Journey; whitherto we attended him, it being very near Dinner Time.

CHAP. VII.

Lord G--r--d *ſteals the Night with* Biddy. *Their Conflict. She follows him to Town. Meet daily. Travel propoſed to Lord* G--r--d. *Diſtreſſed thereat. Repent denying their Marriage; reſolve to confeſs it. An Exceſs of Joy ſinks them both; but recoverd.*

I LEFT their Lordſhips together, not being judged fit Company for the Son, in Preſence of the Father, after what had already paſſed; ſo that retiring to my Chamber, my Children and I enjoyed ourſelves, in ſuch Manner, as the Perturbations of my Mind would beſt permit me.

I SAW no more of Lord *G--r--d* till Bed-time: For the old Gentleman took Care to keep him as cloſe to himſelf, as poſſible. At parting with him for Bed, he enjoined him by no means to ſee me that Night; for he was certain, he ſaid, my very Looks were contagious, and that though his Lordſhip was ever ſo ripe for parting with me, he diſputed not, but if he admitted me to an Opportunity, my Artifices would cauſe a Retraction of, or at leaſt a Wavering in his Reſolution; but added,

added. that as he propoſed to take his Lordſhip to Town with him in the Morning, a few Weeks Abſence would conciliate him to a Separation from me for ever; ſo that having, as he thought, engaged his Son to avoid me for that Night, he went to reſt contentedly.

No ſooner had his Lordſhip fairly laid the old Gentleman to repoſe, than like the moſt paſſionate Lover, he flew to my Chamber, where we ſtole the Night together.

VAIN would be the Attempt, ſhould I aim at a Deſcription of the Hurricane of our Paſſions, till Morning; our whole Beings were abſorbed, in a jarring Variety of Extaſies, Doubts, Confuſions, Fears, Hopes, Sighs, Tears, Joys, and Lamentations, as ſucceſſive, as our Ideas were, of what was moſt likely to prove our future Fortune. The Expectation of a Separation in the Morning, chilled us ſo much, that neither the Heat of our Vows, or the Proteſtations of an everlaſting Conſtancy, could add a living Warmth to our dejected Spirits, or could we utter ourſelves ſo ſignificantly as we would, in Token of our never ending Affection. Every Surmiſe, every Imagination, beneficial, or diſadvantageous to our future Proſpects, was brought to account, canvaſſed, and ſcrutinized, with the niceſt Exactitude; but the greateſt Difficulty we both laboured under was, how we ſhould ſteal future, unnoticed Meetings, with each other.

WE came to a Reſolution, not to diſpoſe of our Furniture, it being for the moſt Part new; but that I ſhould with all convenient Speed, follow his Lordſhip to *London*, (having

firſt diſmiſſed all our Servants, and cleared off every thing in the Country) and there taking an Houſe in ſome retired Street, ſhould ſettle myſelf and Children, and inform his Lordſhip of my Situation, as he then directed me. As to whatever would in future be neceſſary, we deferred all Conſiderations of that, till we ſhould meet in *London*.

My dear Lord left me all the Money he had in the Country, with unlimited Orders upon his Banker, for whatever I ſhould draw for; but now, the Day beginning to peep through our Curtains, we took ſuch a ſolemn Farewel at Parting, as if we had never more been to meet on Earth again; our very Souls iſſuing, and at each Embrace, commixing: For Lord *G---r---d* dreaded lying too long, leſt his Father, who was noted for an early Riſer, might chance to ſurprize us together, which could not have failed, of rendering all our future Profeſſions ſuſpectable by him.

But what we were both the moſt concerned at was, leſt the Earl ſhould make up Matters with Lord *C---d---n*, or poſſibly, have ſome other Match in his View for Lord *G---r---d*; in either of which Caſes, what we had ran ſo many Hazards to avoid, would again be obtruded upon us.

The Earl and his Son left the Country that Morning, and in a few Days after, having adjuſted all my Affairs, to my beſt Satisfaction. I followed them; when having taken an Houſe in the Pariſh of St. *Martin*'s, I ſent for my Goods, and ſettled myſelf under the beſt Accommodation, that my then Circumſtances would then admit of.

My

My next Concern was, (as had already been concerted between us) to inform his Lordſhip of my Situation, which I did by Letter, directed as he had dictated to me. Whereupon, he paid me a Viſit the next Morning: And now, we began again to enjoy ourſelves once more, like reaſonable Creatures: For ſaving that his Lordſhip could but ſeldom be abſent all Night from his Father's, without ſubjecting himſelf to Suſpicion, we had all the Latitude of Intercourſe by Day, that was requiſite; and thus our Time paſſed, agreeably enough, for almoſt twelve Months.

The Earl had not, we may ſuppoſe, been idle all this Time, as to the great Work he had in Hand, of procuring an Alliance for his Son, ſuitable to his own aſpiring Notions; but notwithſtanding the numberleſs Attempts he had made, his Projects had proved all abortive.

As for my dear Lord himſelf, he was wholly out of the Caſe; nor was he to have been in the leaſt conſulted in the Affair, till the Money Matters were brought to Perfection; and then, for Form-ſake, he was to have been ſo deſperately ſmitten with the Lady, that it would have been neceſſary to have hurried on the Wedding, leſt he ſhould have been incapable of ſurviving the leaſt Delay; but, as I ſaid before, every Scheme failing, and the Earl ſuſpecting, that his Son's Character having been ſomewhat blown in the Affair of Lady *Mary*, might occaſion the Unſucceſsfulneſs of his Negociations; he told him, that as it would be time enough for him

to think of Marriage, he had Thoughts of ſending him to travel for a few Years; being perſuaded, he would inſpect foreign Parts far more advantageouſly at his Age, than had he ſent him a raw Lad, juſt from School. He told him alſo that he had provided him a Companion, and that he muſt be prepared in fourteen Days at fartheſt.

IT is ſcarce to be conceived what a Blow was hereby given to Lord *G--r--d*, who had delighted himſelf with the Hopes of his Father's deſpairing to find a proper Match for him; and ſo long as he could promiſe himſelf ſo frequent Opportunities of my Company as he then enjoyed, he concerned himſelf but little at the Caution he was obliged to uſe for obtaining them: But this travelling Scheme, as it would diſconcert all our Meaſures at once, ſo it would occaſion a Separation between us, more inſupportable than Death itſelf.

THE diſmal Sentence had no ſooner rang in his Lordſhip's Ears, than he bore the melancholy Tiding to me, and as was uſual between us, in Caſes of ſimilar Nature, we cloſed in Conſultation, to counteract, if poſſible, the Severity of our Doom; but all our Politicks proved too ſhallow for ſtarting the leaſt material Objection to it.

WE again began to lament our firſt Error, in the Denial of our Marriage; and alſo the perſiſting in it a ſecond Time, when ſo fair an Occaſion had preſented for adhering to it, as when the Earl found us together in *Hertfordſhire*: For we concluded, that had we but reſolutely perſiſted in the Truth, the Certainty

Certainty of our Caſe being irremediable, would either have reconciled the Earl to us, or at once have caſt us out of his Protection; which latter, could not have proved ſo dreadful to us, even in its extremeſt Latitude, as the perpetual Inquietudes we ſuffered, from the Uncertainty of our Affairs, upon every capricious Turn of the old Gentleman's Temper.

Lord *G--r--d*, not to mention my own Concern, which I ſtifled as far as poſſible, was ſo diſtreſſed in his Mind, that he had reſolved with himſelf, rather to have faced his Father's Fury, by cancelling his firſt Fallacy, and expoſing the naked Truth to him, than to have ſubſiſted in ſuch perpetual Uneaſineſs; but an inherent filial Awe, which from the Moroſeneſs of the Earl's Temper, he had from his Cradle been overborne with, as conſtantly gave a Check to every Notion that he could but conceive would irritate his Father.

The Preparations for his Journey were carried on by the Earl with all Alacrity, and an Agreement had been made for his Paſſage; nay the time for his Embarcation was reduced to the narrow Limits of two Days; nor was I deſtitude of the Hope of following him, as had been concerted between us, ſo ſoon as he ſhould have given me notice of its Conveniency; but till he ſhould ſo inform me of it, the Reflection of leaving me and his Children behind him, whilſt himſelf ſhould be purſuing a Courſe the moſt repugnant to his own Nature, and that in foreign Parts too, where we could have no ſpeedy and regular Accounts

of

of each other, reduced him to ſuch Melancholy, as to aſſure me, that as all which was intrinſically of Value to him in Life, were myſelf and Children, he having ſufficient Eſtate to maintain us above Want, though not in the Affluence an Addition of his Father's Poſſeſſions would enable him to do, he was determined to break meaſures with his Father, and decline his Voyage; for that no Diſpleaſure of a Parent could afford him equal Torment with that of leaving us behind him.

THIS having been his Topic for the whole Night (he having ſpent it with me) he aroſe, fully prepared for freeing himſelf that very Morning from his Shackles, as he expreſſed himſelf, which galled him to the very Soul.

I MUST confeſs, I dreaded the Conſequence of this Reſolution, tho' ſeeming ſo determinately bent upon that Way of Proceeding, I did not interpoſe to prevent it. He had no ſooner left me, than the Expectation of what was to ſucceed, ſent me mourning to my Cloſet, where, ſecluded from my Family, I kept a ſolemn Faſt, for the Remainder of the Day, which I wholly ſpent in Prayer, and weeping, for the Succeſs of my dear Lord's Enterprize; nor ſhould I have forſaken my Retreat for the enſuing Night, had I not towards Evening, been roufed by the Voice of my dear Lord at the Door, calling to me.

MY Conjecture of the Report he would make to me, of what had paſſed at his Father's, had ſuſpended me ſo between Hope and Fear, that I had ſcarce Power to open the Door to him; till my Heart, (ever ready to receive him, on what Errand ſoever) inſpiring

me

me with Reſolution, I wiped off my Tears, that they might not augment his Sorrow, and then let him in. His Lordſhip then, haſtily ſeizing me in his Arms, and claſping me, under violent Emotions: O *Biddy*, my deareſt Life, ſaid he, and would have proceeded; but the Paſſions of his Soul obſtructing his Delivery, I found him by Degrees, ſinking, as unable longer to ſupport himſelf; I had the preſence of Mind to lay hold of him, and ſeat him, before he fell, on a Couch which ſtood almoſt behind us; when he was by that Time quite motionleſs, and in my Opinion, lifeleſs too, the Sight of which, rendered my Aid wholly uſeleſs to him; but running to the Stairs for Help, I had Power only to iſſue one violent Scream, before myſelf was reduced to his Lordſhip's Condition.

THE Servants all collected about me immediately, to enquire into the Cauſe of my Diſcompoſure; but finding me paſt the Power of telling them, my Maids, inexpreſſibly ſhocked at my Cataſtrophe, ſnatched me up in their Arms, and moved off with me, with intent to lay me upon one of the Squabs in my Dreſſing-Room; but what a Scene beheld they there, in their Lord, already occupying the other, and in their Apprehenſions, ſtone dead too.

THE Family was in ſuch a Confuſion, each running for what ſhe could think beneficial, that fifty different Applications were employed for our Recovery, without the leaſt Effect, before my own Footman had brought up my Apothecary to us, who being himſelf at a Loſs, on the firſt View of our Condition, in

what manner to proceed with us, ſent forthwith for a Phyſician from the next Street, a Man of conſiderable Eminence in his Profeſſion, who giving inſtant Orders for a Surgeon, gave Direction for opening a Vein in each of us; when perceiving us to Bleed freely, he conceived that we were out of Danger: For this, giving freſh Motion to our Blood, our languid Spirits ſoon gave Tokens of a Return to their proper Functions, though very deliberately for ſome Time.

I VERY well remember, that, upon the firſt Diſcloſure of my Eyes, under a Recollection of my Exiſtence, I was moſt amazingly ſtruck at the group of Figures that then ſurrounded me; nor could I ſoon recover my Recollection, of either where I was, or of what could have occaſioned the Concourſe of Perſons who then ſeemed ſo buſily engaged about me. My Arm was not yet tied up from Bleeding, but who the Doctor or Surgeon was, I was moſt at a Loſs to find out. As for the Apothecary, he having before attended me, my firſt Queſtion was to him, after I had recovered my Voice, to be informed what had been the Matter? why I had been thus attended? and where was my dear Huſband? He replied, that I had been in an hyſteric Fit, and that his Lordſhip alſo was reviving; then making way, by tranſpoſing at leaſt a dozen Fellows and Wenches who ſtood between us, ſo thick that they could hardly ſtir by each other, I perceived my dear Lord alſo returning to his vial Functions; but, as yet, ſcarce able to reply, better he hoped, to my Enquiry after his Health.

Mr

MY Spirits, and with them my Strength, recurring, much more ſpeedily than his Lordſhip's, no ſooner was I capable of ſitting upright, than the Doctor placed himſelf on the Couch at my Right-hand; and, feeling my Pulſe, pronounced the wroſt to be over; ſo that I diſmiſſed all our uſeleſs Attendants, and only retained my own Women with me, and in about a Quarter of an Hour more, both his Lordſhip and I being able to walk a little, we permitted the Doctor and Surgeon to depart with their Fees, but detained the Apothecary for ſome time longer, to whom we are obliged, for an Account of what Condition he had firſt found us in.

HE ſaid, that upon his Arrival, we were both as much ſunk in Spirits as could well be conceived; but our Caſes being ſo ſimilar, and both at the ſame Inſtant too, his firſt Enquiry was, into what we had eaten or drank, confeſſing his Suſpicion, that our Diſorders had ariſen from ſomething pernicious in our Food; but being able to gain no Satisfaction therein, he then imagined they muſt have proceeded from the ſudden Shock of ſome adverſe Occurrence, that had ſo equally affected us both.

THAT in ſo critical a Point, being unwilling to act without further Advice, he had called in the Phyſician, who, propoſing Phlebotomy, had ſent for the Surgeon. He was very glad, he ſaid, to ſee us both in ſo fine a way; but as it was ſtill neceſſary that our Spirits ſhould be kept up, he would ſend each of us a Cordial Julep for that Purpoſe.

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

Lord G--r--d *diſcovers that his Travel is laid aſide. His Inquietude. Another Match propoſed for Lord* G--r--d. *His Lordſhip's Oppoſition. Owns his Marriage to* Biddy. *Fury of the Earl.*

HAVING now parted from all the Gentlemen of the Faculty, I was fearful of making too early an Inquiſition into the Occaſion of his Lordſhip's Diſcompoſure, leſt his Relation of the News I expected might work ſo forcibly upon us both, as to cauſe a Relapſe: For what leſs than ſome inſupportable Shock to our Affairs, could have had ſo violent an Effect upon his Lordſhip!

Whilſt I was forming to myſelf numberleſs Conjectures of what it might be, his Lordſhip, with a ſmiling Air, accoſting me, *Biddy*, ſaid he, we are ſtill to be happy, though I am ignorant of its Continuance; be it our Buſineſs, therefore, to improve the Opportunity. Good, my Lord! as how? demanded I; for my Mind has been ſtrangely forboded, ever ſince your Lordſhip's Return, that the moſt wretched of Fates attended us both.

My Love! ſaid his Lordſhip, my Journey is laid aſide. But what, my dear Lord, ſaid I, is ordained in the Place of it, that ſhould have occaſioned your Lordſhip's ſo late Diſorder, ? O *Biddy*, ſaid he, my Heart was ſo joyous, as I offered at a Diſcloſure of that felicitous

licitous Turn to thee, that a Thought of the Pleaſure you would receive it with, was ſo inſupportable, as to obſtruct all further Diſplay of my vital Faculties.

I ASSURED him of the Delight I received from this Report; but was not without my Fears, that this Revocation of his Father's Sentence, would but prove like a Lightening before Death, and fore-run ſome ſeverer Event than that of his Travels; but let it be what it would, it might, probably, not be ſo precipate an Overthrow to us, as inſtant Separation; and aſked him, if he could frame a Gueſs what it might be?

HIS Lordſhip replied, that his Father had not aſſigned the leaſt Reaſon for this Alteration of his Will; but that coming home (as he had heard) later than uſual the laſt Night, he had enquired for him, preſently after he was ſtirring that Morning; but his Lordſhip knowing nothing of it till after Dinner, had been prevented ſeeing his Father, as he had intended (by an old Acquaintance with whom he had dined) till Afternoon; when almoſt the firſt Words his Father ſaluted him with were, Son, I would have you lay aſide all further Thoughts of travelling, for I ſhall otherwiſe diſpoſe of you. His Lordſhip added, that his Heart almoſt bounded through his Side at the News, and that he forthwith flew to inform me of it; for, *Biddy*, ſaid he, a Moment gained with thee, is a Compenſation for an Age of Woe.

WE could not ſay what might have occaſioned the Change; but I could not ſurmiſe, but it muſt have ariſen from ſome new

Object, that the Earl had ſelected, as a Wife for his Lordſhip, and ſo I told him. Heaven forbid! ſaid he; but I know not what is the Matter with me, I ſhall have no ſolid Peace of Mind till I have revealed our Marriage to my Father. I have, my Dear, added he, ten Times the Awe and Dread upon me in my Father's Preſence, whilſt I act under Cover thus (though the End ſhould anſwer my Purpoſes ever ſo well) that I ſhould have, were he but apprized of the whole Truth. I falter, I bluſh, I heſitate, and am under ſuch Confuſion and Diſtreſs, whenever we confer together, that rather than endure it longer, whenever he again hints at Matrimony to me, I am reſolved to lay all open to him, let the Conſequence prove what it will.

I LIVE with thee here, my dear, added he, more like a Criminal than an Huſband; my Children ſcarce receive me as a Father, nor my Servants for a Maſter; I am debarred all Freedom and Interview with my Friends in my own Houſe; the Reflection upon which ſo conſumes my Reliſh for Life, that I can no longer bear it. I therefore muſt, and will, ſeize the very firſt Occaſion that preſents, for diſburdening my Mind, and will, at all Events, ſtand the brunt of it.

IT was not in my Power to condemn his Lordſhip's Sentiments; but, from my Heart, was grieved we had ever combined together, by ſo notorious an Untruth, to impoſe upon him: For had we but at firſt perſiſted in the Truth, though our future Dependences might have been croſſed by it, yet our Enjoyment of our own, under prudent Oeconomy,

nomy, had been laſting and happy to us: For as neither his Lordſhip or I were addicted to the leaſt Extravagance, ſo an unreſtrained Intercourſe with each other, would have over-recompenſed us for every Difficulty we might otherwiſe have ſubjected ourſelves to: But for us to live in almoſt a State of Exile from each other, and to condeſcend to Stealth and Artifice for every Enjoyment of each other's Society, was what pierced our very Souls, though I had fixed it as my Principle, not to be the firſt Complainant.

THREE Days more had ſcarce paſſed, before the Earl explained himſelf to his Lordſhip, upon his new Diſpoſition of him, by ordering him to pay his Addreſſes to Lady *Fanny S--d--y*; for that he deſigned her for his Daughter-in-law, at the ſame time acquainting him, that ſhe had been apprized of his Viſit by her Father, and that he would be well received by her.

HIS Lordſhip making no manner of Reply to this, but ſtanding mute, and in a muſing Poſture, ready to have promulged our Marriage; What? ſaid his Father, is there no Gratitude due to a Parent's Concern, in procuring you an Heireſs with the vaſt Poſſeſſions ſhe muſt enjoy, at the Earl's Death?

IF you *young* Fellows are blind to your own Intereſts, you muſt not believe that we *old* ones are ſo too. Will not ſuch an Alliance, think you, redound to the Honour and Emolument of our whole Poſterity? Why, Sirrah! wert thou but endued with my active Genius, what an immenſe Eſtate might we not leave to our Deſcendants? But the Slug-

giſhneſs of thy Principles, would rather ſubvert, than elevate their Grandeur. Is there no Gratitude, I ſay, due to all my Cares for your Advancement?

His Lordſhip, who now looked upon the preſent Time as the luckieſt Opportunity for retracting his paſt Error, by undeceiving his Father, was upon the Point of explaining himſelf; when the Dread of his Father's Anger over-powering him, it ſtill adhered to his Tongue, beyond his utmoſt Ability to diſengage it. Shuffling off then, a direct Anſwer, his Lordſhip replied, that from the ſlender Knowledge he had of that Lady, he ſhould be under great Difficulty in making his Advances ſo vigorouſly, as his Honour ſeemed to expect: For that it would, in his Opinion, ſeem ſtrangely out of Character to him, to appear as a Suitor to a Lady, with whom he had never in his Life exchanged a ſingle Syllable, or had ever ſeen, ſave at Court, or at the Play-houſe.

That in ſuch a Caſe, indeed, ſhe might conceive of him, that her Riches had ſmitten him; but as he was ſo far in the dark as to her Speech, Behaviour, and perſonal Endowments, he apprehended, that if at all Events, neither of their Choice was to be conſulted in the Affair, it might be full ſoon enough for them to meet, for the firſt Time, at the Nuptual Ceremony.

His Lordſhip declared, that had he ſtudied a Reply to his Father, he could not have proceeded ſo ſmartly; but that having once diveſted himſelf of Reſtraint, there ſeemed ſo natural a Connection in what he had, with what

what he intended to offer, that being highly irritated, he could ſcarce ſtop without ſaying much more.

HE obſerved his Father's Countenance to cloud over prodigiouſly, and his Lip to fall exceedingly (than which no Token could be a ſurer Prognoſtick of his riſing Fury) but having exerted himſelf ſo much beyond what he had ever before attempted, and imagining himſelf to have far the better End of the Argument, he took Courage, and in a Sort of Triumph, waited the old Gentleman's Reſentment; who having rouſed up his Choler, even almoſt to the Obſtruction of his vocal Organs, at length began with, Why have I ever been curſed with Children? To what End have all my Views in Life tended, but to the ennobling, and enriching, a mean degenerate Scoundrel, unworthy of tranſmitting my Name and Titles, to Poſterity?

HAVE I not, at the Expence of my Bodily-health, and Vital-ſpirits, been Scores of Years turmoiling myſelf, to accumulate an Eſtate, a Title, and Family, for you, Sirrah? and am I not well requited at laſt, think you?

I would not be induced to eſteem thy Mother other than an honeſt Woman, though thy Manners would baniſh the Notion of it: For that thou haſt a Drop of my Blood in thy Veins I moſt ſhrewdly ſuſpect, by thy Actions. —— Did I vainly diveſt myſelf of Ten Thouſand Pounds, in the Purchaſe of a Title, only to tranſmit it to thee? —— Why married I Lady *Betty G —— s?* Only to amaſs a Competency for thee: —— But I have ſettled much of my own upon her Children already,

and though ſhe reſerved all her Wealth to her own Diſpoſal, yet I having had the Addreſs to prevent her making any ſuch, that is all now fallen into my Hands: So that, Scoundrel, added he, had not your Great-uncle left you ſomething, you, and your Whore, whom I ſuppoſe you ſtill correſpond with, ſhould periſh together for me, I can promiſe you?

O! the Stupidity of that old doating Fool, not to have left his Eſtate to me! I might then have had the Government of my own Child.—But that is your all.—You ſhall be the Earl of *B*———*n*, with Three thouſand Pounds a Year; much good may it do you.—Hark ye, Spark, I have other Children for my Eſtate, who, I hope, will better deſerve it, or they ſhall ſtarve without it.

WHY was I born to be thus wretched! added he——What a Name ſhall I leave behind me, in thee and thy beggarly Iſſue!—The Thought diſtracts me.——Have you yet recollected yourſelf?——Are you repentant for what you have done? Do you reſolve to proſecute my Meaſures?—Here, added he, take this Key; open my Scrutoir.——Look over the Titles of thoſe Papers, and bring me my Will.——There, you ſhall ſee what an indulgent Father I would have proved to you by Inclination, and then for your Diſobedience to my Commands, you ſhall ſee me burn that Inſtrument, which would have beſtowed ſuch Wealth upon you.——Oh! this World is no reſting Place for me!

His Lordſhip being now peremptory in his Reſolves, of not truckling an Ace to his Father, was the leſs anxious what became of the Will; though upon producing it, the Earl read it aloud to him; whereby it appeared, that he had given to his Lordſhip, all the Mortgages, and Money Securities, which had been his late Wife's, the Lady *Betty G-----s*, amounting as he then ſaid, to an hundred and forty thouſand Pounds; beſides a real Eſtate, of thirteen thouſand Pounds a-year.----Now, Son, ſaid he, (very coolly) ſhall you this Day, according to my Pleaſure, pay your firſt Court to Lady *Fanny*, or the whole of what I have named to you, ſhall be diſtributed to my younger Children.

My dear Lord replied, that it was with the utmoſt Regret, he ſhould be obliged, in any Degree, to counteract his Lordſhip's Requeſt; but begged him to conſider, the purpoſed End of all his Purſuits, not as directed to his Lordſhip's Happineſs, but to his own: For that they were inſtituted before his Lordſhip had a Being; and then, that his Lordſhip ſhould prove the next in Succeſſion to him, was ſo far from his Father's Choice, that as to him, it was wholly accidental. That as to his Riches, by what Means they were obtained, himſelf beſt knew, but that they were accumulated for his Lordſhip's Sake, he abſolutely denied; for that had they ſo been, his Father would have gloried, in rendering them beneficial to him, but the direct contrary appeared, from every Step he had yet taken with him; nor could his Honours have been procured with other

View

View than his own Gratification, by raiſing him a Family, and Name, in his own Poſterity; for had theſe, ſingly, or conjointly, regarded his Lordſhip only, what would it be to his Father, whether he was the richeſt or pooreſt of Earls, in caſe he was but one of the happieſt: From all which, his Lordſhip added, that it was apparent to him, that his Father only ſought a Name for himſelf, at the Head of a ſucceeding Generation of Nobles, and that too, at the Expence of his Lordſhip's future Tranquility.

SIR, added his Lordſhip, as I have my own Inclination to gratify, as well as you have had yours before me, I am from henceforth determined, not to ſacrifice my every future Comfort, to the moſt ample Acquiſitions that can accompany the Loſs of them. ——I have only to requeſt your Forgiveneſs for one Error in my Conduct, with which, could I not reproach myſelf, I would hereafter, to the beſt of my Capacity, obey every of your ſucceeding Commands, ſo far as legally, and conſcientiouſly I might, there lying nothing ſo uneaſy on my Mind, as that.

As to the Fortune you have given me by your Will, if it ſhall prove your Pleaſure to confirm that Benefaction, I ſhall ever acknowledge your Bounty; if not, I will never repine at it.

THE Earl then demanded, of what Error his Lordſhip craved Forgiveneſs; for having engaged to ſubmit to his Pleaſure in all Things, he would ſtrive to forgive, and forget

forget it. Sir, replied my dear Lord, it is the having impoſed an Untruth upon you, in the Denial of my Marriage with *Biddy Farmer*; whereas ſhe actually is my Wife, and ſuch an one, as I muſt henceforward boaſt of, in the Face of the whole World.

THE Earl, though he was then under Apprehenſions of an approaching Fit of the Gout, and in no little Pain with it, ſtarting from his Chair, was making with all Haſte to his Sword, from which, and divers other ſymptomatick Tokens of an implacable Fury, his Lordſhip judging his Perſon but inſecure in his Preſence, took to his Heels, and clapping the Door after him, made the ſpeedieſt Way that he could, home to me.

CHAP. IX.

Lord G----r----d *and* Biddy *appear publickly. He dines with the Earl. Sends for his Children. Don't return at Night.* Biddy's *Horror. No Intelligence of them at the Earl's.* Biddy *follows to the Earl's. Her Reception there.*

HIS Lordſhip had not, for many Months, exhibited ſo gay a Countenance, as he appeared with upon his Return from his Father; which highly delighting me, I could not but crave a Share in his Satisfaction: For though I bore up with chearful Covering oftentimes, it is not to be imagined, but I muſt conceal a heavy Heart, when I reflected

flected upon the Sufferings my dear Lord was daily expoſed to for my Sake.

My deareſt *Biddy*, ſaid his Lordſhip, kiſſing me, I am Conqueror, I am Conqueror. I have this Day publiſhed our Marriage to my Father, and to prevent all Poſſibility of Retraction, I am reſolved to take you and *Dicky* with me to the Play to-night, where you ſhall appear as my Lady, and *Dicky* as my Son, that all the Town may be ſatisfied, any further Match-making for me can be of no Effect.

I am, my Dear, all Joy and Gladneſs; all Life and Spirits, added he, and may fairly call this, the firſt happy Day I have ſeen, ſince I firſt equivocated with my Father: For I am now perfectly eaſy as to all that can befal me, and ſhall return no more to my Father's.

I told him, that nothing could more joyfully affect me, than theſe Expreſſions of his Satisfaction; but from his laſt Words, I could but collect, that all was not right between him and his Father. He replied it was not, and that it was a Mercy I had ever ſeen him alive again; for that if he had not inſtantly made his Eſcape, he verily believed his Father would have ſtabbed him. He then gave me a particular Detail of what had paſſed on both Sides, and how he had come off at laſt.

He appeared that Evening at the Play, daily viſited about in the Chariot, and received Company at our own Houſe, and purpoſely frequented every Place of public Reſort, that no further Doubt of our Marriage might

might remain with any one: But I could not in all this Time, ſince I had been in Town, gain the leaſt Intelligence of what was become of my Mother Mrs. *Thomas*; for I longed, if poſſible, to have been ſome way beneficial to her, as my Station would then have admitted of it, in caſe ſhe had ſtood in need of my Aſſiſtance.

SOME Weeks had now paſſed, ſince we had ſeen or heard any Thing from the Earl; nor gave we ourſelves the leaſt Concern about it, not building our Hopes upon any future Advantage to us from that Quarter, till, as we were ſitting at Breakfaſt one Morning, we received a Meſſage by his Servant, which contained an Invitation of his Lordſhip to Dinner with him that Day.

IT was near an Hour before we could reſolve upon an Anſwer to this unexpected Invitation; for that, as well his Lordſhip as myſelf, had infinite diſpleaſing Conjectures, relative to the Views his Father might have in this Invitation; nor could we, at length, reduce them into any thing beneficial to us.

HIS Lordſhip could with no colourable Pretence, as we both thought, avoid ſo civil a Requeſt from a Father; nor could he truſt himſelf into his Company, without dangerous Reflections on what might have proved the Conſequence of their laſt Interview, had he not ſo abruptly left him. On the other hand, ſhould he decline this ſeeming friendly Summons, it might afford a juſt Pretence for his diſinheriting him, as his Father, no doubt, would inſinuate his Intent of a Reconciliation

conciliation on his Part, which his Lordſhip had declined to accept of.

AFTER numberleſs Reaſonings therefore, pro and con, his Lordſhip preſented his humbleſt Duty to his Father, and would do himſelf the Honour of waiting upon him. I muſt confeſs, that had it been ſolely my Caſe (from the known Implacability of the Earl's Temper) I would ſooner have ſtarved upon my own Income, and in my own Innocence, than I would have ſubjected myſelf to his Machinations. However, his Lordſhip reſuming his late Compoſure, took leave of me very pleaſantly, and drove to his Father's, aſſuring me, that unleſs he met with the Reception he hoped for there, and the direct contrary to that at their laſt Meeting, his Stay would be very ſhort with him.

His Lordſhip had not left me more than an Hour before his Chariot returned, with a Note under his Hand for me, in the following Words:

My deareſt Biddy,

ALL will go well, my Father relents, and condemns his hard Uſage of us. He is all Impatience for embracing the Children, delay not to ſend them inſtantly to

Your ever affectionate

R—— G——

WHAT a grateful Proſpect my Eyes received from this Writing! I even flew to obey my dear Lord's Orders, and having dreſſed

dreſſed them and their Maid as elegantly as poſſible, I diſpatched them accordingly, and in about half an hour more, the Maid returned with the Chariot, giving me an Account of the gracious Reception they met with from their Grand-papa.

I KNOW not how to account for it, but moſt certain it is to me, that our good or evil Genius, taking Poſſeſſion of our Souls, inſpire us frequently with a Senſe of approaching Deſtiny, before itſelf appears in Action to us: For I was never occupied by ſuch a Set of gloomy Ideas in my whole Life, ruſhing through my Fancy, upon any prior Occaſion whatſoever, as from the Moment I had ſent away my Children; not could all the Efforts I made for their Removal, in the leaſt vary their Misfortunes, or prevent their Succeſſion or Continuance.

I WOULD fain have perſuaded myſelf, that this was really a parental Care of the Earl's, in order to have ſignified his Approbation of, or at leaſt his Submiſſion to, our Junction, and that their Meeting would have proved the Dawn of a thorough Reconciliation between them, as, moſt undoubtedly from his Letter to me, my dear Lord expected it would have been. Nay, even from my ſoundeſt Judgment, formed upon my own Reaſonings, I could not but conceive that I had ſufficient Foundation for my Concluſion: But my Arguments were no ſooner framed, than an involuntary Impulſe, contrary to my cleareſt Deductions, and in ſpite of the Convictions of my own Heart, would hurry me down the forlorn Stream of fouleſt Diſpair, till ſunk

into an Abyſs of Horror, I was ſcarce able to emerge from it again.

THE whole Day having paſſed in this confuſed Manner, as Night drew on, my Fears began to take a more ſenſible Turn, leſt ſome inveterate Cataſtrophe ſhould have befallen my dear Lord and Children. The Clock had now ſtruck twelve, and I had neither ſeen nor heard from them.

I LINGERED on the Time till two, ſubject ſtill to freſh Suggeſtions, momentarily ariſing, in my diſtreſſed Imagination, which had, by this time, rouſed ſuch a Hurricane in my Breaſt, that no longer capable of proceeding deliberately in my Reflections, my ſeveral Paſſions contending each for the Maſtery, had ſo occupied and alarmed the Stage of Reaſon, as to have thrown every Faculty into an Uproar.

I RAVED, tore my Hair, ſmote my Breaſt, and calling every Servant in the Family about me, I ſent one here, another there, pointed to them to behold their murdered Lord, whoſe pallid Corpſe I verily theught I beheld, at every point of my View, all ſmeared with Blood, and ghaſtly, with yet flowing Wounds; ſo that my whole Thoughts, Words, and Actions, were alike incoherent, and but one Complication of Inconſiſtencies and wild Diſtraction.

DAYLIGHT appeared, but with it, introduced not what my fluttered Soul longed after, my ever deareſt Huſband and Children. I ſent my Footman to the Earl's for Intelligence; but the ſole Anſwer to be obtained was, that his Lordſhip left his Father ſoon after

after Dinner, in Company with two Gentlemen, who were Strangers, ſince which, he had not returned to his Father's. That the Childten were ſent upon an Airing to *Hyde-park*, in the Earl's Coach, which afterwards returning without them, the Servants ſuppoſed they had been ſet down at home.

THIS dark Account of my Family increaſed the Horror of my former diſmal Apprehenſions, almoſt to Deſperation. My Lord miſſing, and my Children loſt, were inſupportable Afflictions to me. I ran to my Dreſſing-room, where ſnatching up ſuch Things as next preſented, I dreſſed myſelf, ordered the Chariot to the Door, and in the Height of my Calamity, poſted away to Lord *B-------n*'s.

I HAD, during my going thither, compoſed myſelf in the beſt Manner my conflicting Spirits would permit me, that, if poſſible, I might keep clear of all Extravagance in the Earl's Preſence; but I might have ſpared myſelf that Caution; for, upon hearing who I was, he refuſed ſeeing me, or even admitting me within the Houſe.

I WAS then driven to ſuch an inſufferable Dilemma, not knowing how to behave, that having wept ſtanding, till my Legs were ready to double under me with Fatigue, I ſate me down upon the Steps of the Houſe, within the Court-yard, where my Sorrow redoubling upon me, I made the whole Court ring with my unreſtrained Lamentations, for a full Hour, before a Soul of the Family dared to exchange a ſingle Word with me,

though moſt of them had, at times, in that Interval, paſſed by me.

My Wailings and Outcries had at length collected a Mob before the Door, which the Earl obſerving to increaſe, and dreading the Scandal that would redound to him, when it ſhould come to be known who I was, he ordered me to be conducted into the Houſe; but without an Inſight into my dear Huſband's Fate, the Street itſelf had been as agreeable a Seat to me as the very beſt in his Lordſhip's Manſion.

So ſoon as the Crowd, which my Cries had gathered without Doors, was diſperſed, the Earl ſent Orders for my Diſmiſſion; but I refuſed to ſtir till I had ſeen him. This he being informed of, ordered Violence to be uſed with me, to compel me from thence; when again, my Shrieks on that Occaſion being heard through the whole Neighbourhood, and the Paſſengers again ſtopping before the Gate, I was returned to the Houſe, and replaced in my former Situation.

CHAP.

CHAP. X.

Biddy *admitted to the Earl. Their Diſcourſe. Wants her to part with her Huſband. Second Interview with the Earl. Articles for parting propoſed to her. Rejected. Threatens to procure a Divorce.* Stringer *witneſſes againſt* Biddy. *As does* Eſther. Biddy *deſpices them.*

I HAD ſcarce compoſed myſelf after my Return, before the Earl deſcending, ordered me into the Parlour to him, whom I had no ſooner beheld, than I proſtrated myſelf before him, and begged him to give me Knowledge of my Huſband, and my Children. Woman! ſaid he, how know I who your Huſband is? No! my Lord, replied I, not know your own Son, Lord *G---r---d?* You are a filthy Strumpet, ſaid his Lordſhip. My Son your Huſband! Yes, my Lord, replied I, my loving, true, and lawful Huſband. Neither can I now conceive him under leſs Horror and Amazement at your preſent Proceedings with him, than I myſelf am; I am aſſured you have deprived him of his Liberty of returning to me, or he would never, of his own Accord, have attempted this unreaſonable Elopement from me; therefore, dear my Lord, as yourſelf will one Day hope for Mercy, extend it to a poor diſtracted Woman, who now craves it of you.

O! my Lord, added I, conceive but yourſelf but in my Condition. You have twice been married, and ſurely, at ſome time, at leaſt, have been ſenſible of true Love and Affection. Conſider but your dear Wife, as raviſhed from your Arms, by Treachery, by Violence, unable to return to you, and labouring with Pangs worſe than Death, if worſe can be, under a forced Privation of you, her Huſband: The ſame, Sir, muſt now be the Portion of your own Son, and your own Vexation, mine. I ſpeak it not from Vanity, but from a Senſe of its Subſiſtance in Lord *G-----r-----d*, equally with myſelf; then not for my Sake, but for his, Sir, compaſſionate him, and me, in him.

THEN for my Children, Sir, they cannot have offended you; O! deliver them, good my Lord, to their abandoned Mother, nor rack their tender Souls, by ſo remorſeleſs a Seperation from her.

WELL! ſaid the Earl, and now I have had the Patience to attend that Tongue of yours to the Concluſion of its Harangue, ſo pathetically delivered, as you think; what tends it all to, but to demonſtrate its Owner to be the infamous Creature I have ever taken her for?

Do you imagine, that this artificial Cant, and Common-place Argument, will have the leaſt Effect on me?---It ſhames me, that my Son ſhould have proved himſelf the puny Raſcal, to have ever been captivated by this Bombaſt Stuff of yours; but Miſtreſs, you have no Green-head to deal with in me. I have been uſed to your ſofty Riſings, and

ſoft

ſweet Cadences, with your good my Lords, dear my Loads, Love, and Affection, till I am ſick of them. I tell thee, Woman, thou art none of my Son's Wife, or ever ſhall be. He has done with you; and as for your Children, they will never trouble you more: So that as you are now but one in Family, you may eaſily provide for yourſelf; nor ſhall you ever ſee my Son more, till you have renounced all Claim to him, as he already has to you.

As he already has to me, my Lord, I am prepared to it; but durſt your Lordſhip put it upon that Iſſue? ſaid I; pardon me for ſaying ſo, I am not ſo weak to credit you, and therefore, will venture my whole future Happineſs, which can only center in Lord *G--r--d*, my legal Huſband, upon that Story; nay, I will in the moſt ſolemn and ſacred Manner, diſclaim all future Pretenſions to him, if Face to Face, he ſhall voluntarily relinquiſh me.

O! the deſigning Hypocrite! ſaid the Earl, what an Opinion haſt thou of thy own Excellencies! What? thinkeſt thou to charm him into an Agreement with thy Sentiments, by thy deceitful Allurements? No, no, you miſtake your Man. I tell thee again, he has deſerted thee; denies his Marriage, nor will he ever behold thy deluding Face more.------ Ay, ay, whimper, do, (for I cried ready to break my Heart) Crocodile; give yourſelf Airs, and caſt your Limbs into prepoſterous Attitudes, grow frantic, do, and follow your proper Calling. It is the End of moſt of your Stamp, when they ſink from high Keeping, into their primitive Nothing, they range as

Vaga-

Vagabonds about the World, under Pretence of Diſtraction, for Love.

WHAT am I reduced to! thinks I, for I could then have tore the Tongue from his abuſive Throat, in the Rage he had advanced me to) when, as recollecting himſelf a little, I muſt own, added he, I look upon your Caſe with ſome Compaſſion, however; and ſince my Son has abandoned you, if you will alſo publickly diſavow him for your Huſband, and deſiſt from perſecuting him with your Wiles, I have ſtill ſo much Humanity in me, as to allow you fifty Pounds a-year for your Life. Let me adviſe you to live honeſtly, and that will prove a very pretty Proviſion for you.

I HAVE many a Time ſince wondered, how it was poſſible for me to bear up, under ſuch a Torrent of Calamity, as then ſurrounded me; but my Innocence ſtill kept me on float, and at the Time I am now ſpeaking of, eſpecially, I muſt have been more than naturally aſſiſted, not only in contemning his Threats, but in diſmiſſing his Offers, with all due Indignation. Then patiently waiting the Event, I retired to my own Houſe.

I COULD not conceive, that the old Gentleman's Inveteracy againſt me, could extend to the depriving an own Son of his Life, for adhering to me: For I doubted not his being aſſured of my being Lord *G--r--d*'s Wife, and conſequently, of the Legitimacy of my Children; nor was I under much Fear, after I had reflected for a while, but that I ſhould by ſome Means or other hear from his Lordſhip, the firſt Opportunity he could gain for the

the Purpoſe: For I was ſo thoroughly convinced of his Integrity to me, as to be certain, that mere Violence alone could reſtrain him from it, ſhould he be prevented coming himſelf to me; and in theſe Sentiments I remained, for at leaſt ten Days.

ABOUT the Expiration of that Period, the Earl ſent for me to his Houſe, Madam, ſaid he, when laſt I ſaw you, your Tears had ſuch an Effect upon me, that I made you an Offer of fifty Pounds a-year for your Life; but your inſiſting that you was my Daughter-in-law, I could not think of ſeparating you abſolutely from your Huſband, (as now I find he is) by my Compulſion, merely, whilſt he ſhould believe your Integrity to him as a Wife, would ſtand unimpeached; but I have now to inform you, of my Son's earneſt Requeſt, that I ſhould for him, proſecute you for Adultery, and ſue you to a Divorce from him. I ſhould think, added he, that Matters had bettet be accommodated between you, and as it will ſave Expence on both Sides, and an Expoſure on a publick Stage; here, ſaid he, (giving me a Parchment into my Hand) ſign this Article, and I will ſtill be ſo noble to you, as to adhere to the Promiſe I lately made you.

WHAT am I to do with this, Sir? ſaid I. Only to ſign it, replied he; for you will receive no further Maintenance from my Son, and may come upon the Pariſh for Alms, but for my Pity to you.

HIS Lordſhip, obſerving that I was beginning to read it; What uſe will it be of, ſaid he, for you to peruſe it? You are no Judge

of

of Writings. You need not fear its being properly drawn for the Purpoſe; ſign it, I ſay, ſign it.

SIR, replied I, your Honour need no more fear my reading it, (for it was wrote in a Character, that would have puzzled a Decypherer) than I need fear its Propricty; but give me leave to proteſt to your Lordſhip, that it ſhall never be graced with my Hand to it.----No, Sir, I have already received too many Tokens of your Kindneſs to me, to ſuſpect your preſent Veracity: I doubt not its being as proper for your Purpoſe, as improper for mine; but let me add, Sir, that it is not the leaſt Alleviation of my Diſtreſs, that I have it, as I can plainly deſcry, as palbably in my Power to increaſe your Torment, or more than you can mine.

YOU have a Son, Sir, and you aim at tranſmitting, through him, an Honour you have bartered for, and an Eſtate that may redound to your future Glory, at the Head of his Poſterity; but let me tell you, Sir, the Blood of an Earl may deſcend as untainted through my Iſſue, as that of the moſt opulent Dutcheſs in the Land.

YOUR Son, Sir, far from an Inheritor of your Principles, with your Blood, diſdains your Titles as much as your Maxims; and but that your Patent annexes thoſe to your Heir-male, would with equal Pleaſure relinquiſh them as yourſelf obtained them; neither values he your Eſtate farther than as a Support to your unwelcome Honours.---You dread the Thought of being ſtiled, when you are gone, the Father of a poor Family

of

of Earls, leſt the World, which will never find Occaſion to brand Lord *G---r---d* with the Character of a Waſter, ſhould ſuſpect you of having been one, when they ſhall behold my Huſband with the Title, without an Eſtate equivalent. How vain your Imaginations are, would be impertinent in me to urge, to a Man whoſe Caſh and Ambition have ever been his darling Deities.

YOUR Lordſhip, added I, hath diſintitled yourſelf to any Compliments from me. You ſee I am plain with you, my Sentiments are your Son's alſo, and ever will be ſo; nor ſhall any oppreſſive Acts of yours, ever cauſe a Retraction in either of us. Had you eſteemed your Son for his own ſake, you would have valued his Comforts in Life, which, whatſoever you may urge to the contrary, all center in a virtuous Wife, and I am her. I deſpiſe your chimerical Adultery and Divorce; and though you are and muſt, and ſhall be, my Father-in-law, ſcorn to become your penſioner, upon your own mean Conditions, or any other.

O! THE pure Strain of an Harlot, ſaid the Earl; virtuous Wife! Innocence itſelf! I'll warrant you, would but the World give Credit to you; but, as to your Adultery, my Son being now convinced of it, I having the Evidence at hand, living Teſtimony, more than one Eye witneſs, thoſe flighty Airs you may pleaſe to give yourſelf, in my private Parlour, will be of ſmall avail in a court of Juſtice, where Matters are determined upon poſitive Evidence, without Regard to the Criminal's ſimple Plea of Innocence.

MY

My Lord, ſaid I, but for the Reſpect I bear to my Huſband's Parent, I ſhould be apt to reply, as this injurious Treatment of a virtuous Woman deſerves; but pleaſe your Fancy ſo long as you will, with the Deceit, I defy you to produce a ſingle Inſtance of my Diſloyalty to Lord *G---r---d*, in Thought, Word, or Act, except that one Overſight againſt his Honor, when, combining with him, I conſented to diſown our Marriage to you.

His Lordſhip then called in his Penſioner *Stringer*; Mr. *Stringer*, ſaid he, I call you to declare your Knowledge as to this virtuous Woman's Chaſtity. You have known her long. Hath ſhe, to your Knowledge, ever proſtituted herſelf to any Man, or hath ſhe ever been a true Woman to her Huſband?

Stringer was not a little confounded at my Preſence; but covering it under the Reluctance wherewith he muſt expoſe a Lady, for whom he profeſſed to have had a peculiar Eſteem, replied, that far be it from him to glory in his Conqueſts over the Fair-ſex, and ſo far, every Tendency to caſt a Blemiſh over my Character, in particular, that he could well hope he might be excuſed from ſo unwelcome a Taſk as his Lordſhip had enjoined; but when his Lordſhip, before whom his Duty obliged him to act with Sincerity, thought fit to lay his Injunction upon him, every ſcrupulous Suggeſtion muſt give place to that, and his Lordſhip muſt be obeyed.

As to the main Queſtion, he ſaid, not to mention the ſeveral Acts of my Miſbehaviour, which Fame only had informed him of,

he

he ſhould proceed to only what had fallen more immediately under his own Cognizance; though ſorry he was that he muſt thereby caſt a Slur upon his own Reputation, which no Conſideration ſhould have induced him to, leſs than his Lordſhip's Command; but to ſpeak the Truth ingenuouſly, himſelf had lain with me, by my own Appointment.

MY Blood perfectly boiled in my Veins at Sight of that foul Raviſher; but having heard his Tale, I could have ſtabbed him to the Heart, had I been Miſtreſs of ought that would have reached it; for he proceeded with ſuch an undaunted Air of Truth in his Report, that had I not been conſcious of my own Innocence, I could not, as a By-ſtander, have even ſuſpected his Veracity.

THIS, I preſume, Sir, ſaid I, you would impoſe upon his Lordſhip as a Verity. Your Lordſhip already knows what Credit my Huſband gives to it. Woman, replied the Earl, I alſo know, that Mr. *Stringer* was not then preſent when Lord *G---r---d* delivered himſelf; but whatever my Son may have thought, I tell thee, he is now fully convinced of thy Falſhood to him.

TURNING then to *Stringer*, ſaid I, Pray Sir, did we meet by Agreement in the Horſe-pond, and in the Dunghill too? Wretched *Stringer!* is it come to this? Surely thou haſt not yet received ſufficient from his Lordſhip's Bounty, to hazard thy Soul in his Quarrel. Poor Man! when thou haſt anſwered this dirty Job, there will be an End of thy Perquiſites. His Lordſhip parts with no Caſh unprofitably.

How dareſt thou, poor miſerable Man! to curry Favour with any one, brave out a Lye thus plauſibly? thou impudent Diſguiſer! Diſguiſer! ſaid he; was it not at your own Requeſt that I did it? leſt accidentally his Lordſhip ſhould return before we were ſtirring the next Day.

O HEAVENS! ſaid I, dread you not ſinking into the Earth quick, for this Falſity? Ay, ay, ſaid the Earl, right Strumpet ſtill; ſome Prodigy, ever ſome Prodigy, to clear the Innocent, no doubt; but go on, go on, Mr. *Stringer*.

MY Lord, ſaid *Stringer*, I have done; but as this as happened to be denied by the Lady, which I muſt own I could not have ſuſpected her to be ſo hardened as to have attempted, I ſhall beg leave to call in another Evidence, in corroboration of what I have teſtified to your Lordſhip, leſt, through her Audacity, your Lordſhip ſhould be miſguided to diſcredit me.

WHO ſhould this doughty witneſs be, but my former Maid *Eſther*, who, dropping a Curt'ſy, deſired to know whether I would ſpeak with her?——*Eſther*, ſaid I, you well know that you have proved yourſelf a baſe Creature to me; and was proceeding to have charged her as an Accomplice with *Stringer* in this intentional Debauch of my Perſon, when the Earl cut me ſhort, by demanding my Silence, till *Eſther* had finiſhed her Tale; then calling to her, Mrs. *Eſther*, ſaid he, what know you of Mr. *Stringer*'s bedding with that Woman?

MAY it pleaſe your Lordſhip, ſaid ſhe, I would not for the World, by a ſingle Step, exceed the real Truth. I cannot ſay that I ſaw them bedded; but it was ſo currently reported in the Family; and indeed, my Lord, I ſuſpected ſome ſuch thing to be in Agitation, when my Lady ordered me to deliver a Suit of my Night-clothes, or Night-gown, and Pettycoat, to Mr. *Stringer*.

WITH what a Face of Braſs canſt thou withſtand this Teſtimony? ſaid the Earl to me. My Lord, replied I, I have lived long enough to be fully aſcertained, that when once a Villain has told a Lye, it is to no Purpoſe to enquire whether he is not aſhamed of it: For had he but poſſeſſed the leaſt Tincture of this in his Compoſition, he had avoided it: So that in Chriſtian Charity, I have only to pray for their Reformation, and in the mean time, to intreat you to cheriſh them, if you hope for any Benefit from them, or the next Bidder may employ them to impeach your Lordſhip.

PRAY, Mr. *Stringer*, ſaid I, was I paſſive, or was I turbulent upon the Occaſion? Paſſive as a Lamb, ſaid he, till by Chance, you heard one of the Men-ſervants coming down Stairs, when you told me you was afraid we were betrayed, and immediately ſet up ſuch an Out-cry, as almoſt frighted me out of my Senſes, and ſo ſtupified me, that I ſuffered even the Women to creep in upon me, without the leaſt Oppoſition.

I PRESUME, ſaid I, that by this Time, your Lordſhip can ſpare me, having furniſhed yourſelf with ſuch powerful Evidence againſt me;

but to your Diſgrace let me ſpeak it, I challenge you to produce them for your Purpoſe. Nay, ſo far will I be from ſhrinking from the Efforts of their utmoſt Malice, that name but your Day and Place, I will attend you with ſuch a Cloud of Witneſſes, as ſhall endanger ſome of your Ears in the Scuffle, or let me forfeit all Intereſt in my dear Lord for ever.

You talk very big, Madam, ſaid the Earl; but were not the Reports of theſe Perſons genuine, they could never be ſo uniform, and themſelves ſo unconcerned. O! my good Lord, ſaid I, you can't penetrate their Conſciences. I am certain, they muſt have an Hell within them, as that my every Action, with regard to my Huſband's Honor, is pure as the Heavens themſelves. Then turning upon my Heel I left them.

CHAP. XI.

Letter from Lord G---r---d *to fetch* Biddy *to* Dublin. *She obeys. Near being undone by* Stringer. Stringer's *Accident. She diſcovers* Stringer, *in the Place of her Huſband.*

IT may much more be readily conceived, than I am able to deſcribe, the miſerable Life I ſtill led, from the uncertainty I was under, of what was become either of my Huſband, or my Children; the Privation of whom in ſo unaccountable a Manner, I could never have ſurvived, had not the Earl's Impatience for inducing me to relinquiſh my Claim

Claim to my ever dear Lord, ſtill encouraged me to hope, that he was living, tho' moſt undoubtedly under an unwilling Reſtraint; but ſo long as I could but flatter myſelf of his being alive, I bore up under his Abſence, with uncommon Fortitude; waiting, with all the Patience I was Miſtreſs of, till Providence ſhould in its own due Time, unriddle the Myſtery.

MY late Adventure with the Earl, had ſcarce been concluded more than a Fortnight, before I received a Letter from Lord *G---r---d*, wherein he informed me, that Buſineſs of the utmoſt Conſequence had called him over to *Ireland*, in ſuch haſte, that he could gain no poſſible Opportunity of notifying it to me before his Departure, by taking a formal Leave of me. His Engagements there, he intimated to be of ſuch a Nature, as probably might detain him much longer than he had expected; adding, that he ſhould find himſelf there, in a moſt melancholy Situation, unleſs I would favour him with my Company. He gave me Directions where to enquire for him; but added, that being wholly unknown there, he choſe to remain incognito; for which Reaſon, he had aſſumed the Name of *Shepard*, by which he deſired me to enquire for him.

WHAT could I think of this Letter!----A Voyage to another Kingdom, undertaken without my Participation, or even the leaſt Hint of it to me, I could not but imagine to have ſomewhat very ſtriking in it. Poſſibly, ſaid I, this may be ſome Buſineſs of his Father's, that he has over-perſuaded my Lord

engage in, as the Price of their future Reconciliation; and the Earl may have ſeized this Opportunity of his Abſence, to work upon me to my own Confuſion, that he may find ſomewhat culpable to charge me with, at my Lord's Return.

I THEN looked again at his Lordſhip's Letter, dubious of its Genuineneſs, and cautious leſt I ſhould be anywiſe impoſed upon; for ſo much Artifice and Stratagem had been uſed with us both, that we were at a Loſs to know on whom to rely.

I HAD now aſſured myſelf, that the Letter was of his Lordſhip's Writing, by comparing it with many others under his own Hand; but his Lordſhip cannot have taken his Children with him to *Ireland* too, thought I; then what can have become of them? I quitted this Thought, under the Reflection, that as they all left me on the ſame Day, and that without his Lordſhip's Expectation of ſuch a Journey; ſo undoubtedly the Children muſt alſo be diſpoſed of under his Knowledge and Conſent; and that on my Arrival in *Dublin* I ſhould be informed of their Deſtination; but the Letter to me being dated from *Dublin*, my whole Force was bent to a Compliance with it; his Lordſhip's Intimation of his Reſidence being ſufficient, without more ado, to have ſent me after him, not only into a neighbouring Kingdom, but even to either *Indies*, with all Alacrity.

WHEN theſe Cogitations had taken their Turn in my Mind, my Doubts again ſucceeding, I had Recourſe again to the Letter, and alſo to the Note I had received, that had be-

bereaved me of my Children, when after ſome Debate with myſelf, I was within an Hair's Breadth of condemning them both as counterfeit, till again examining them with others, I was but the more confirmed in my former Opinion, that they were both of his Lordſhip's own Hand.

IT would have been impoſſible for me to ſay, but that his Lordſhip's Journey was judiciouſly taken, and that Matters unforeſeen by me, might have required that Expedition, which was inconſiſtent with his apprizing me of it, before he arrived at *Dublin*; but now I was ſo certain of his Deſire to find me there, I would ſuffer no Time to ſlip till I had put myſelf upon the Undertaking.

MY firſt Enquiry was, for the Road I muſt take, and the uſual Method of paſſing over thither; when being informed, that I ſhould have but a ſhort Paſſage by Sea from *Holy-head*, taking one Servant only with me, and a Trunk or two with my Baggage, we ſpeedily arrived at *Dublin*, where my firſt Enquiry was, for the Houſe of Mrs. *Newburgh*, where his Lordſhip, in his Letter, had intimated to me that he lodged.

I SOON found it out according to Direction, and ordered my Servant to knock at the Door. It was a very genteel private Houſe, ſo far as I could remark of it, in the Decline of the Day; and I was deſired by the Servant who opened it, to walk in. I enquired for one Mr. *Shepard*, who was above in his Apartment, as the Maid told me. She ſaid ſhe would let him know I waited for him, and

deſired

deſired me to ſend up my Name, which I told her was *Shepard.*

I WAITED full half an Hour before ſhe returned, which at length ſhe did, with an Anſwer; but I had all the while wondered prodigiouſly, what Buſineſs his Lordſhip ſhould be engaged in, that could have occaſioned me ſuch a Delay; nothing having ever been ſo private in his Lordſhip's Affairs, that I might not have been admitted to.

SHE told me, that Mr. *Shepard* perceiving himſelf very ill, with a violent Cold he had caught, was gone to Bed; but upon her acquainting him that my Name was *Shepard*, he had deſired me to walk up to him.

So ſoon as I was ſatisfied of my being arrived at the right Houſe, I ſent away my Servant directly, to bring up my Baggage from the Ship, with Orders to take notice of the Houſe, and to ſee it all ſafe conveyed to me; and then I followed the Maid up Stairs to my dear Lord's Chamber, but under great Heavineſs of Spirit at the Report I had heard of his Illneſs.

SHE coudu&ted me into a dark Room, where the only Glimmer of Light that could enter, was the ſmall Remains of the Twilight, which paſſed through a thick Pair of Window Curtains, and there ſhe left me, to grope out my Way to the Bed-ſide, as well as I could, by ſuch a faint Direction as I could there gain to it.

I SOON heard a Stir of the Bed-curtains, and then calling, in a low Voice, My dear Lord! I was anſwered, in a ſtrained Tone, ſo hoarſe, as ſcarce to diſcover the leaſt Clearneſs

neſs of Sound, or more than an articulated Aſpiration. How does your Lordſhip do? ſaid I. He replied, that a Cold he had taken lately, had entirely deprived him of his Voice, and that he was under ſuch acute Pain with his Head and Limbs, that he could ſcarce ſtir himſelf; then feeling for my Hand, and drawing me down to kiſs him, he embraced me in his Arms for a conſiderable Time.

I KNOW not how it happens, but there is an inexpreſſible Sympathy between the Sexes, upon the Contact of two Perſons truly loving each other; but this, to my then thinking, not anſwering to my Deſires, I aſcribed it to his Diſorder; for there had ever been a downy Softneſs and Glow, accompanying each Embrace of my deareſt Lord, which I was not then ſenſible of; but inſtead thereof, my Lips were met by a Deadneſs, and damp clayey Touch, which not a little augmented my Uneaſineſs, leſt his Lordſhip ſhould have been much worſe, than he ſuſpected himſelf to be.

I ENQUIRED into each Symptom of his Diſorder, ſeparately; and preſcribed ſeveral Remedies, aſſuring him, that I would that Night ſit up and attend him; for that by endeavouring to keep him in a conſtant breathing Sweat, till Morning, I was in great Hopes, he would find himſelf better.

I WAS going down, as I told him, that I might ſend for ſuch Things, as I apprehended would be beneficial for him; but ſitting then upon the Bed-ſide, and having my Hand in his, he would by no means ſuffer me to ſtir; for that perceiving himſelf inclinable to ſleep, he ſaid, if he could but procure a good Night's Reſt,

Reſt, he was in Hopes of being another Man, by Morning. Then deſiring me to come to bed to him, he urged his Apprehenſion, that my ſitting up with him, or adminiſtring any thing to him in the Night, would only keep him wakeful, and retard his Cure.

I, WHO had never been poſſeſſed of the Spirit of Oppoſition to the Will of my deareſt Lord, would not now gainſay his Propoſal; but ariſing, prepared for finding the further Side of the Bed, that I might there undreſs myſelf; where meeting with a Chair, I was ſitting down to prepare for it, and my Baggage not being as yet arrived, I had already tied my Handkerchief about my Head, by way of Night-cap: but would no more offer at introducing a Candle; for that having at my firſt coming mentioned it, he declared his Head to be upon ſuch a Rack, that the leaſt Glimmer of Light would make him go diſtracted.

I HAD juſt unpinned my Gown, when he aſked me whether I had locked the Door. To which I replied in the negative; nor did I readily know where to find it. He then, as well as he could utter himſelf, directed me round the Bed, and I retook my Place, as before.

I WAS now in my Under-pettycoat (without either Shoes or Stockings) and was untying that, in order to have ſtepped into Bed; when I perceived him to have a ſtrong Tendency to coughing; but obſerved, that he ſtifled it all he could; till having ſome how cauſed a Stoppage in his Wind-pipe, he fell into ſuch Agonies, with Rattling and Straining,

ing, that I expected no leſs than each ſucceeding Moment would have been his laſt, and that he muſt have been ſtrangled, before it would be poſſible for me to collect any Help about me: For he now hooped ſo terribly, that I was almoſt terrified to Death at it.

BEING in a ſtrange Houſe, where I had as yet ſeen not a living Soul but the Maid, I was under the greateſt Conſternation, but my Fears for my deareſt Lord, prompting me to the loudeſt Expreſſions of them in my Power; ſlipping on my Shoes, I ſtampt upon the Floor as hard as poſſible, and joining thereto my ſtrongeſt Vociferations, it became very improbable, that any living Creature could ſubſiſt within thoſe Walls without hearing me.

I HURRIED on ſuch of my ſcattered Garments as I could firſt lay my Hands on, and had but juſt covered over my Body in the looſeſt manner, before the Family were in a Cluſter at my Door; which having opened to them, for Goodneſs ſake, ſaid I, aſſiſt my poor Huſband, or he muſt be ſtrangled.

SNATCHING then the Candle from one of their Hands, I ran with it to the Bed-ſide, to ſee what condition my Huſband was in; but his Face ſeemed ſo ſtrained with his ſtruggling, that it was not only ready to burſt, but looked to the full, as black as one's Hat; nor did I in my Fright, and under the ſhocking Appearance I then beheld him in, once miſtruſt his being my very Lord himſelf; but ſcreaming out, my Huſband is dead, my Huſband is dead, the Terror I conceived at the Sight, caſt me lifeleſs into a Chair, which

which opportunely ſtood at the Bed's-foot, where I lay wholly inſenſible, of what was in future tranſacting.

EVERY one having now ſurrounded the Bed, with a ſeveral Application, all poſſible means were uſed to his Relief; but I was paſt yielding any Aſſiſtance, till every one crying out to draw back the Curtains, and give him Air, they at length brought him to a regular Breathing; when they had leiſure to conſider the Condition I was reduced to.

NO ſooner had they recovered me from my Stupor, than longing for a Sight of my dear Huſband, I flew to the Bed-ſide, to be aſcertained of his Reſtoration to Life again; when to my inexpreſſible Aſtoniſhment, who ſhould my Eyes behold in the recovered Perſon, but the perfidious Villain, *Stringer*, as yet ſcarce capable of breathing with Compoſure, from the Flutter his Lungs had been in.

I SHRIEKED out, juſt as the Company were about quitting the Room, and was very near a Relapſe into my fainting Fit again, which occaſioned their all returning; when obſerving an Air of Superiority in one of the Women, and inſtantly ſuſpecting her for the Miſtreſs of the Family, I intreated her to receive me under her Protection, and to permit me to ſome private Conference with her: For that whot I had ſeen in her Houſe, had ſo ſhocked me, that I was ſcarce able to bear it. This ſhe moſt readily condeſcended to, and invited me into her Apartment.

CHAP. XII.

Biddy *claimed by* Player *as his Wife. Strange Confuſion to the By-ſtanders.* Stringer *claims her. They quarrel. Turn it all upon* Biddy. *Threaten her with a Proſecution for Bigamy. Mrs.* Newburgh *reſponſible for her forthcoming.*

NO ſooner were we arrived in the Lady's Chamber, than I ſent the Maid for ſuch of my Clothes as I had left behind me in the other Room; but had ſcarce thoroughly dreſt myſelf, before ſomebody knocking hard at the Street-door, word was brought me, that a Gentleman was below, enquiring for a Lady, who had arrived there that Evening from *England*. This I ſuſpecting to have been my Servant with my Baggage, I deſired the Lady's Leave for introducing him to me.

I HAD as yet had not the leaſt Time or Opportunity for the ſtating my Caſe to the Lady, or of imforming her of the Impoſition put upon me by *Stringer*; though I purpoſed to have done it, ſo ſoon as we ſhould have been a little ſettled; but whilſt I was waiting for an Account of my Things from my Servant, the Maid uſhered into us, a Gentleman, whom I had never before ſeen, and pointed to me, as the Lady he had enquired for.

Is your Buſineſs with me, Sir? ſaid I: When ſtaring ſternly in my Face; Baſe Wretch! ſaid he, thou vile, ungrateful Woman! canſt thou be at a Loſs for the Knowledge of your own Huſband? Huſband! replied I; you muſt be groſsly miſtaken, Sir; I have indeed an Huſband, but another Sort of Man than you are, I'll promiſe you. Pray examine me more narrowly, added I; have you ever in your Life ſeen me before? if ſo, its more than I can ſay of you, I am poſitive.

CONFOUNDED Artifice! Damned Hypocrite! Front of Adamant! ſaid he: What! deny the Knowledge of your own Huſband? Have you not been married to me theſe five Years? Have you not now four Children living by me? Have you not eloped from me in purſuit of *Stringer*, who is lately come in this City before you?——Foul Adultreſs! I heard of your Progreſs, and Paramour, and watched you from the Water-ſide to this Houſe; nor doubt I, but the wicked Wretch your Seducer, is near at hand; but I ſhall leave no Stone unturned to diſcover him, and ſhall give you both your juſt Reward; at leaſt, for yourſelf, Madam, as I have now found you, I ſhall make you a public Example, you may depend upon it.

I POSITIVELY declared to Mrs. *Newburgh*, (the Lady of the Houſe being ſo called) and to ſome others, whom the Fellow's high Words had by this Time gathered round me, that I had never ſeen the Man's Face before; and that he was an entire Stranger to me, nor knew I ſo much as his Name.

HE alſo, himſelf, began then to appeal to Mrs. *Newburgh*, whether it could be poſſible that any Man ſhould be miſtaken in his own Wife, after ſo long a Cohabitation, as between him and me? And aſked, whether they had ever before heard of ſuch bare-faced Impudence as this, of a Woman's denying her own Huſband to his Face? —— Madam, added he, my Name is *Player*, and I profeſs to you, that every Word I have hitherto uttered to you is a Verity; but pray, what Name hath ſhe given herſelf, ſince ſhe hath been in your Houſe?

MRS. *Newburgh*, aſtoniſhed at the Diverſity of our Allegations, replied, that it was a mere Accident, that had brought her to the Knowledge of me at all, and that ſhe had hitherto, had no Opportunity of enquiring my Name; but ſaid, ſhe took me for an *Engliſh* Lady, who had followed my Huſband thither, who was her Lodger before I came over: For that he had aſſured her, he ſoon expected his Lady after him, and that ſhe preſumed, I was his Wife.

THE Maid, who was ſtanding by, then put in a Word, declaring, that at my firſt Arrival that Night, I had enquired for Mr. *Shepard*, who being ill, cried, Oh, it is my dear Wife, whom I have a long Time wiſhed to ſee. Tell her I am not very well, and ſhew her up to me, immediately. She added, that ſo ſoon as ſhe had ſhewn me the Chamber, ſhe retired; that Mr. *Shepard* was then in Bed, and by her hearing no more of me for ſome Time, ſhe imagined no leſs, than that I had been in Bed with him.

O! THIS concerted Scene of Debauchery, ſaid *Player*; but we all know, that Perſons whoſe Proceedings are ſcandalous, for the moſt Part, cover them under feigned Names, and Characters. That ſhe is my Wife, I can juſtify before all the World; but I ſhall be glad to ſee the Perſon ſhe calls *Shepard*, for moſt probably, though under ſome Diſguiſe, I ſhall in him diſcover the Traitor *Stringer*, as I am informed his Name is.

SIR, ſaid I, the Aſſurance with which you utter theſe Falſities, ſo confound me, that I am at a Loſs to think how it ſhould be poſſible, for human Nature to degrade itſelf thus, as even to belye its own Heart, and contradict its own Conſcience, as yours do now.

I DOUBT not, Madam, replied he, but my Preſence confounds you, as indeed, it well may: For that you expected me not here, is moſt certain; but that what I now urge, is either falſe, or contradictory to my Conſcience, is not ſo clear, but that yourſelf will have an hard Taſk to prove it. Come, come, to put the Matter paſt all further Diſpute, or Difficulty, added he; lead me to this *Shepard*, as you call him, and if he proves you his Wife, by ſuperior Claim to myſelf, notwithſtanding my legal Title to you, I will for ever renounce, and leave you.

EVERY one then preſent, allowed that the Gentleman had put it upon a very fair Footing, and adviſed me to join Iſſue with him; when I deſired their Patience for a few Words. Madam, ſaid I, addreſſing myſelf to Mrs. *Newburgh*, you are ſenſible it is ſcarce

two

two Hours that I have been within your Doors, one of which, was near upon ſpent below, in waiting an Anſwer to my Demand, whether Mr. *Shepard* was at home or not. I was then introduced to him, in a dark Room, he pretending to be ill of a Cold; but that Deceit was only a Pretext, to conceal his true Perſon from me. He had prevailed upon me to bed with him, as to my real Huſband; and had not Providence interpoſed to the Prevention of it, by reducing him to the laſt Extremity by a Cough, of which you are Witneſſes, I had moſt aſſuredly wrought my abſolute Ruin with him: For with what Face could I ever have beheld my dear Lord *G--r--d* more, my only true and real Huſband, after once I had diſhonoured his Bed: But upon your Approach with a Light, my Diſtreſs for the Loſs of my dear Lord, whom I verily expected to have found in the dying Man, for ſome Time deprived me of all Senſation; till perceiving upon his Recovery, how near I was to having delivered myſelf into the Arms of that very *Stringer*, this Gentleman ſpeaks of, you know Madam, with what Difficulty I was preſerved from relapſing into my former Fainting; nor had I either Breath or Strength then left, for publiſhing the Cauſe of it.

YOU, Madam, well know, added I, that the Time I have had ſince my retiring with you, hath been far too ſhort, for me to have perfected an Explanation of theſe Myſteries to you, for that this Man, who calls himſelf *Player*, (whoever he may really be) entered upon us, even before I was well dreſſed;

and ſince his coming, I ſubmit to you from the Share he hath had in the Converſation, and the wonderful Things he hath advanced, how little Opportunity I have had of putting in a Word till now; but whilſt the Diſcourſe is in my Hands, I ſhall, with your Leave, juſt proceed to inform you, that Lord *G--r--d*, eldeſt Son to the Earl of *B------ n*, having wrote me Word of his Arrival in this City, required me to follow him, and enquire for him at your Houſe, by the Name of *Shepard*; for that his Lordſhip, intending to be private here, could not remain incognito in his proper Character, as he might, as a private Gentleman only.

For this Reaſon, nothing doubting but his Lordſhip had been here, and that it had been to him I had been conducted by your Servant, I made no ſcruple of approaching his Chamber, nor ſhould I, of entering his Bed, had not this laſt, as I ſaid, been providentially prevented.

I call Heaven and Earth to witneſs, that I know nothing of you, Sir; but as for the Villain, *Stringer*, it is not the firſt Time, that he has well nigh been too many for me; having one Night in my own Houſe, had the Impudence, in my Lord's Abſence, to aſſume the Habit and Form of my Woman, and place himſelf in my Bed before me; but Providence then alſo, averted the Miſchief intended me, under that Stratagem. Nay, ſo ready am I to credit the worſt of Plots from *Stringer*, that I am now fully perſuaded, the whole Contrivance of bringing me hither, has been the Maſter-piece of that wicked Fellow,

low, merely to ſubject me to his vile Purpoſes.

WHAT a cooked-up Story have we here? ſaid *Player*; was there ever ſo fruitful an Invention? A mere Heap of Deceit, jumbled together, of a Lord and a Lady, an intended Rape, and I know not what; and this, only to raiſe a Miſt, to cloud the Eye of a lawful Huſband; but may I never ſee my native Shore again, if I have not ample Satisfaction from you both, before I have done with you.

MADAM, ſaid I, (for I ſcorn to hold parley with that Fellow, who muſt have ſuborned the Powers of Hell, for the Aſſurance he puts on, to deceive me with, to my Face) my Servant, who is but gone to the Ship for my Baggage, when he returns, will ſoon clear up whether I am the Wife of a Peer of this Kingdom, or of that Impoſter, who may be a Scotch Pedlar, for ought that I know to the contrary.

PLAYER, then raiſing a Sort of triumphant Smile, Come, come, ſaid he, lead me the Way to this *Stringer*, we may poſſibly gain ſome Truth from him, tho' I perceive it is not to be expected from this wretched Woman: For having once formerly ſeen him, I am apt to believe, I ſhall know him again.

WE advanced to *Stringer*'s Chamber, where we found him ſtill in Bed; when *Player* opening the Curtains, Yes, ſaid he, this is the very Man.—What, Sir, ſaid he, could have induced you to run away with my Wife?—Your Wife? Sir, ſaid *Stringer*, ſhe was a Widow when I married her, and is now my

deareſt

dearest Wife; then shew me the Man on Earth, that dares to claim her from me.

I AM that Man, said *Player*, and my Wife she hath been till within these three Months, that you, or some such Rascal, has inveigled her away from me.

Stringer then seeming in a violent Rage; Stay, Sir, said he, till I rise. You shall have all the Satisfaction that one Gentleman may demand of another: But know, Sir, that no Man breathes long, after such an Affront as you have given me.——Rascal! Rascal! Sir, (dressing all the while as fast as possible) you shall swallow that Word, before I part with you.——That Lady, Sir, is *my* Wife, and yourself the Rascal, for suspecting she is not.——Pray, Sir, said *Player*, moderate your Warmth a little. What was her Name when you married her? *Player*, replied *Stringer*; a Widow, as she informed me; nor have I so little Regard for her, as ever to decline my Title to her.

I THEN plainly perceived, that this was all a concerted Scheme, between these two blustering Heroes, to distress me, whilst a Stranger in the Country, and to reduce me to the Acceptance of their Measures; and was proceeding with my Reflections thereon, when *Stringer* being dress't, ran to his Sword, by way of Vindication of my Chastity, as he prot sted: For that an Injury offered to my Character, stabbed him to the very Soul. He could have passed by a Slight to himself; but the Man who should cast an Imputation upon me, should not survive, to repent the Indignity.

MR.

MR, *Stringer*, ſaid I, your Voice is finely mended ſince this Man's Viſit to you. It is ſcarce half an Hour, ſince you was dying, and could whiſper only, with hard Straining, you was ſo hoarſe. Surely, my Dear, ſaid he, you are mad. I hoarſe?—I whiſper?——What Crotchet have you in your Head now?—— Then turning to Mrs *Newburgh*, This Fellow, Madam, ſaid he, has turned my poor Wife's Brain.

GENTLEMEN, ſaid Mrs. *Newburgh*, this Flood of Myſteries is too unfathomable for me to wade in.—— I am wholly loſt in Amaze and Intricacy. Either this Lady is unworthy of the Sex ſhe bears, or ſhe is highly injured by you both, and hath an hard Card to play between you.

MADAM, ſaid I, ſuſpend your Opinion of me till my Servant returns from on board; he will ſoon diſpel all theſe Vapours, and ſet Matters in a clear Light again.

THOUGH I had expected no leſs than the Death of one, or both of theſe Champions, from the Fury of their firſt Menaces to each other, till they were both upon a Square for Action; yet, no ſooner might they have engaged upon equal Terms, had they been ſo diſpoſed, than their ſwaggering ſubſided with cool Reaſoning; and that no further Animoſity might ſubſiſt between themſelves, they tranſferred their Rancour for each other, wholly againſt me; and as ſeemingly very good Friends, both impoſed upon by the ſame Object, having conferred upon the Clearneſs of both their Nuptuals with me, they combined in a Determination, to proſecute me for Bigamy,

gamy, and inſiſted, that unleſs Mrs. *Newburgh* would be reſponſible for my Forthcoming in the Morning, they would ſecure me that very Night by a Peace-officer.

I BEING a perfect Stanger to Mrs. *Newburgh*, ſhe was ſomewhat cautious of intermeddling in an Affair, where ſhe might eventually come into Trouble; but was nevertheleſs ſo averſe from my being taken into Cuſtody by an Officer, that conceiving there was ſomewhat, (as ſhe afterwards complimented me) both in my Story and Behaviour, convictive of her Judgment in my Favour, notwithſtanding all their Allegations againſt me, ſhe generouſly undertook for my Appearance to any Charge that they might exhibit againſt me in the Morning; but having all of us wearied ourſelves in the Argument, we ſeparated ourſelves for reſt, and Mrs. *Newburgh* being a Widow Lady, took me for her Bedfellow.

CHAP. XIII.

Biddy *relates her Hardſhips to Mrs.* Newburgh. *Mrs.* Newburgh *credits her.* Biddy *loſes her Servant and Baggage.* Stringer *hath a Conference with* Biddy. *Purport. A Scene of Villainly to diſtreſs* Biddy.

IT is not to be preſumed, that having ſo much Matter in my Head, we two Women could take much Reſt, till I had diſburdened myſelf of the Load that then oppreſſed me;

me; ſo that before Morning, Mrs. *Newburgh* was almoſt as much Miſtreſs of my Life, Marriage, Diſtreſſes, and Difficulties, as I myſelf was, nor did I blazon *Stringer*'s Character in leſs worthy Colours, than it deſerved.

IN ſhort, my little Hiſtory had ſo wrought Mrs. *Newburgh* into a favourable Opinion of me, that ſhe aſſured me, ſhe ſhould give herſelf not the leaſt Concern after my ſafe Keeping; but would permit me, upon my Parole of Honor, to behave as I pleaſed.

HAVING neither ſeen or heard from my Servant, ſince I had ſent him to bring up my Baggage; in the Morning, I grew greatly concerned at it, and expreſſed myſelf ſo to Mrs. *Newburgh*; when ſhe told me, I was at Liberty to go down to the Ship, and enquire after him, if I pleaſed; nothing doubting, but her Honor was ſafe in my Hands; but informed me, what time her Dinner would be ready, hoping I ſhould be at home by that Time.

I ACCEPTED of her Kindneſs, and deſcending to the Quay, the utmoſt Intelligence I could there gain was, that the Veſſel from which I had landed the preceding Day, was ſailed for *London*, through the *Downs*, and by all that I was further able to learn, had my Servant on board her.

THIS went ſo near to my Heart, that it ſunk me more than all that had hitherto befallen me, ſince my firſt landing: For what could become of me in a ſtrange Country? or how ſhould I clear my Way back again, without Money and other Neceſſaries?

I HAD

I HAD only ſome running Caſh in my Pocket; my Banker's Notes, to the Amount of two hundred and odd Pounds, which I had packed up with my Clothes, and which would have been as good as ready Money to me, being all plundered, and conveyed away from me, I knew not whither; together with every Shirt of Linen and Apparel, that I had ſhipped on board with me.

SOMETIMES, I imagined that my own Servant had proved the Thief, had landed the Goods, and run away with them by Land; ſometimes, that he had procured the Veſſel to ſet Sail with him to *London*, that he might receive the Caſh on my Notes, and whatever elſe would ariſe from the Sale of my other Things; then again, I would check myſelf for my Suſpicions of him, who, in all other Caſes, had demeaned himſelf faithfully to me, and my Courſe of Thought biaſſed me, to judge ill of the whole Veſſel's Crew, who imagining my Boxes might contain Matters of no mean Value, might have carried off my Man involuntarily, and not only ſo, but might poſſibly murder him, to pave their Way, with leſs Danger, to the Plunder.

AFTER framing ſeveral Conjectures in my Mind, I began to form an Argument from the Conduct of *Stringer* and *Player*, on the foregoing Night, (for there could be no Villainy ſo deſperate, or Machination ſo iniquitous, that I could not conclude them capable of) that poſſibly, the Departure of the Veſſel might have been procured by their Means, in order the more to depreſs me, and render me more ſupple to their Purpoſes: For I no ſoon-

er

er ſaw *Stringer* at Mrs. *Newburgh*'s, than I quitted all Doubt, that the Scheme to bring me thither was the Earl's; not only to remove me from the Power and Knowledge of my Huſband, but alſo from *England* too, (where I might, and with Facility could, have juſtified myſelf, from every malicious Imputation) into the Hands of thoſe Tools of his Indignation, till they might reduce me to ſuch a State, as to prefer his late Offer, and my Liberty, to perpetual Haraſſing, and Conflicts, under Diſgrace, and Penury.

THIS, I ſay, I now made no Doubt of; but whenever the Earl's Stratagems recurred to my Mind, the Delight I took in counteracting and oppoſing them, proved the moſt friendly Balſam to my wounded Spirits; for then, I wrought from Inclination, which added Vigor to every Reſolve tending that Way.

HAVING gained at the Water-ſide, the beſt Information that I could of the Veſſel, my Servant, and Goods, and that fully ſufficient to ſatisfy me, that I ſhould never ſee either of them more, I kept up my Spirits, upon the Proſpect of the Banker's anſwering ſuch Draughts as I ſhould make upon him, and poſted back to Mrs. *Newburgh*, with the melancholy State of my Affairs, and under full View of writing to the Banker for that Purpoſe, by the next Pacquet; and for ſtopping Payment of any loſt Notes, in caſe they ſhould be tendered to him; and alſo, I thought to deſire him, to ſend my Servants thirty Pounds for their Subſiſtence, till my Return to them.

UPON ſummoning my Purſe, it anſwered to eighteen broad Pieces, which I hoped

would prove a Competency, till my Returns from *England* ſhould arrive, and then entering Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Room, I ſurrendered myſelf her Priſoner.

SHE informed me, that Mr. *Shepard*, whom I called *Stringer*, had been with her, deſiring to ſee me. That ſhe had ſignified to him my being abroad upon my Parole; and that ſhe expected me before Dinner-time.

HE ſeemed, ſhe ſaid, to have coveted an Intimacy with her, beyond what ſhe had approved, from the indifferent Character I had given her of him; but that he would obtrude his Sentiments upon her, right or wrong; inſinuating, that if he could but have half an Hour's Talk with me, before *Player* began to be troubleſome, he doubted not but that I would go off with him, and thereby eſcape *Player*'s Fury: For that he was determined to proſecute me for a double Marriage, and had been adviſing with his Lawyer upon it already; but ſaid, he believed nothing would be concluded upon as that Day; and that he would wait in his Room till I came in, of which he deſired to have the earlieſt Notice.

WE debated it over for ſome Time, whether I ſhould give him a Meeting, or deny myſelf to him; when at length, it was upon many Accounts agreed, that I ſhould ſee him, leſt by declining it, I might ſeem to indicate a guilty Conſcience, which would avoid the Touch-ſtone of Truth. I therefore ſent the Maid to inform him of my Return, and that if he had any thing to communicate to me, I was then with Mrs. *Newburgh*, in her Dining-room.

IN

IN Anſwer to this, *Stringer* returned, that he would intreat the Favour of ſome Conference with me in his own Chamber; but that I abſolutely refuſed him, aſſuring him, by the ſame Meſſenger, that my Choice, which even led me to decline the Sight of him at any Rate, would never more permit me to engage ſingly in Company with him again, but that if he had any thing to offer, fit for me to hear, it could not conſiſt of ſo private a Nature, as for me to exclude Mrs. *Newburgh* from the Participation of it; ſo that I deſired him, either to deliver himſelf in her Preſence, or to lay aſide all Thoughts of offering it to me.

THOUGH this was by no means agreeable to *Stringer*'s Inclination, whoſe Mind was fraught with ſuch a Cargoe, as was by no means adapted to a public Audience; yet, ſenſible his every Effort to gain me to himſelf, would prove unſucceſsful, after the Anſwer I had returned him to his Requeſt, he ventured in to us, where ſolemnly alledging, that he had Privacies to offer to my Conſideration, proper only for my own Notice, he begged the Favour of Mrs. *Newburgh* to withdraw, for a few Minutes, ſince his Buſineſs would require no Length of Time with me.

I PEREMPTORILY oppoſed her leaving me, which he as ſtrenuouſly inſiſting upon, and with ſome ſeeming Sincerity aſſerting, that he had matter of the laſt Import to my Welfare to inform me of, I began, through the bent of natural Curioſity, to ſlacken the Rigor of my firſt Reſolution, by ſubmitting to her leaving us, upon her Engagement to ſtir no further from us, than the next Room, and

to return upon the leaſt Call, or other Noiſe that ſhe ſhould hear: For I own, I was not without Hopes, that poſſibly he might have reflected ſo ſeriouſly, as to have ſeen his Folly, and have repented of the treacherous Service he had embarked in; by which means, I might, probably, have penetrated the Depth of the Earl's Policy, and been the better prepared for counterplotting him.

MRS. *Newburgh*, having now left us together (though I would by no means ſuffer him to lock the Door) he thus began to accoſt me.

MADAM, ſaid he, ſince no intruding Eye can penetrate, no officious Ear can collect, or ſubtle Senſe perceive, what paſſes from me to you, but your own; ſo as to occaſion any Alteration in, or Abortion to, what is, or may be propoſed to you, or in future accompliſhed; I beg leave to explain myſelf ſo fully to your Comprehenſion, that neither Doubt, or Scruple of my Meaning, may remain with you.

BELIEVE me, Madam, I am not about to juſtify, either my prior Conduct at his Lordſhip's, or the Part I have acted between the Earl of *B----n*, and your Ladyſhip, or what may have ſince happened, from any Motive of my own; ſenſible as I am of my own Deficiency, ſhould I attempt it; but Madam, that future Events may glide in a Channel moſt agreeable to you, I take leave to offer my Advice to your Ladyſhip.

YOU are but too well apprized, with what Inveteracy the Earl of *B-----n* proſecutes his Rancour againſt you. It is with an Eye full of Vengeance, that he beholds in you, a Daugh-

Daughter-in-Law; ſince by your Marriage with his Son, he is deprived of thoſe Advantages, which from the Alliances his Father could unite him to, would redound to his Family.

YOUR Ladyſhip is not now to learn, (for ſurely by your Sufferings, you muſt long ere now have experienced) that neither yourſelf, or Lord *G---r---d*, can have the leaſt peaceable Moments in Expectation, ſo long as the Earl lives; For aſſure yourſelves, his Devices againſt you, will but conclude with his Being.

NOW, what I have before hinted at, tends equally to the Inquietude of you both; but what I am in the next Place to proceed to, will principally relate to yourſelf.

WHAT reverſionary Hopes can you form to yourſelf from Lord *G--r--d*, upon his Father's Death? Will he not then feel the Deveſtiture of a noble Eſtate, which will have paſſed into other Hands, and might all have been his own, but for that you were his Wife? With what an Eye of ſcorn, contempt, and hatred, muſt he then behold you? As poiſonous muſt you then prove to his Sight, or Touch as an Aſp, or Viper. Madam he muſt curſe the Day that firſt made you inſeparably his own, for it can never be preſumed, that Lord *G--r--d*, with all his Virtues, can ſo abſolutely diveſt himſelf of human Paſſions, as not to repine at the Loſs of ſuch vaſt Acquiſitions as yourſelf will be the only Impediment to his obtaining. What leſs then muſt you expect, than to be deſpiſed, ſpurned at, turned out of Doors, and abandoned by him, as the guilty Authoreſs of his undoing? He muſt, I

ſay, whilſt human Paſſions govern him, loath and deteſt you; and poſſibly, in the Summit of his Deſperation, reduce you to the Dregs of Miſery.

MADAM, added he, the Scene that I have thus undertaken to plan out to you, is not ſo uncommon, as that it ſhould be ſuſpected for a vain Chimera, and yet, it is avoidable. Were it not better then, in time to bethink yourſelf, and whilſt Lord *G---r---d*'s Peace is ſtill attainable, and your own Comforts in Life may be laſting, to renounce your Claim to him, before you may become ſenſible of the Pangs of an involuntary Separation? Had you not better, I ſay, teſtify your Compliance to the Earl's Deſires, by the Acceptance of another Huſband, (for nothing leſs than that will be a ſufficient Security, againſt your future Claim to Lord *G---r---d*, in the Earl's Opinion) and bind him firmly to your future Intereſt?

I HAD no longer Patience at this Harrangue; but was about to have replied with ſome Warmth; which *Stringer* perceiving, ſtopt me ſhort. Dear Madam, ſaid he, hear me out.----Nothing, I ſay, but your Marriage to ſome other Man, can convince the Earl of your hearty Concurrence with his Wiſhes, and the Intereſt of his Son, and inſtate you in a ſettled Courſe of Tranquility, under the Sunſhine of his future Favours to you.

I AM ready, Madam, to accept you for my Wife, nor ſhall I inſiſt upon other Merit, than an inviolable Affection for you. I am certain it would be in vain ſhould I attempt it; but that you may be aſſured of a comfortable Subſiſtance

ſiſtance as my Wife, (in caſe you ſhall ſufficiently conſider your own advantage to be come ſo) his Lordſhip, of his Bounty, will beſtow on each of us, a thouſand Pounds, upon the Day of our Marriage, and allow us each, an Annuity of a clear hundred Pounds a-year; with which Donations, I doubt not, but we may paſs through the Remainder of Life, happily.

As for your Children, Madam, added he, they are provided for, and will be no more burthenſome to you. Your Coach, your Horſes, your houſhold Furniture, all are ſold and gone, not a Rag is left you, nor will Lord *G--r--d* ever ſee you more. Now, whether of theſe is the better, either by your obſtinately adhering to your Claim to Lord *G--r--d*, who in Obedience to his Father's Commands has deſerted you, to render both him and yourſelf contemned by the Earl, and miſerable? Or by accepting of me for your Huſband, not only to ſubſiſt happily yourſelf; but at the ſame time, to reſtore his Lordſhip to the Care and Protection, of an indulgent Parent?

THESE, Madam, being the Benefits to redound from a Compliance to the Earl's Will; permit me ſomewhat more to enlarge upon the Conſequences, moſt aſſuredly attendant on your Contumacy. You cannot be inſenſible, to the Infelicity of your preſent Condition, from the Proceſs that has hitherto been concerted to diſtreſs you, and poſſibly, to deprive you of Life, at leaſt, of all future Credit, and Character in Life; and all Favour from Lord *G--r--d*: For *Player* will ſwear you to be his Wife, and that you have

ſo

ſo been for many Years, and of this he will produce Evidence, who were preſent at your Nuptials with him. I alſo am compelled to do the like; which, your following me by the Name of *Shepard*, enquiring for me by that Name, as my Wife, with your acknowledging me for your Huſband before Mrs. *Newburgh* and her Family, when you convoked them all to my Aſſiſtance; your readineſs to have bedded me, and many other Circumſtances, which in due Time will all be marſhalled againſt you, will but the more contribute to confirm.

Now, theſe Things all laid together, and duly weighed, how will you, Madam, added he, in a ſtrange Country, deſtitute of all manner of Supplies, (for your Servant and Baggage have been diſpoſed of by *Player*'s Means, and all Payments likewiſe ſtopt at your Banker's) how will you, I ſay, diveſted of all future Aid, Relief, and Suſtenance, as alſo of every Hope of Evidence (ſave your own Word, which in your own Cauſe will avail nothing) how can you, I ſay, in oppoſition to the clear, and poſitive Evidence, that will be offered to your Diſcredit, pretend to ſtem the Tide, that muſt ſo impetuouſly bear you down before it?

MADAM, added he, you muſt be loſt, you muſt be undone; and that irretrievably too, without Redemption; unleſs, beholding your own Intereſt in the Mirrour I have expoſed to your View, you comply to a Marriage with me; in which Caſe only, I can aſſure you of better Days, and both of his Lordſhip's, and his Father's Benevolence to us both.

CHAP.

CHAP. XIV.

Biddy's *Reply to* Stringer. *Debate about returning to* England. Biddy *reſolves upon it. Goes with Mrs.* Newburgh *to fix upon a Ship. Taken in Cuſtody by the Way, and committed to Priſon.*

THE tedious Length of *Stringer*'s Oration, had made it neceſſary to pauſe for Breath before he could proceed further, though poſſibly he might have ſo done, had not I, who had already exerciſed my Patience to its utmoſt Extent, ſeized the Opportunity of a Reply.

MR. *Stringer*, ſaid I ſmilingly, permit me to give you Thanks for this Exhibition of the undiſguiſed Villain to me. I am obliged to you for this generous Declaration (which hath unfolded the Earl's Schemes to me, perhaps, beyond what my natural Genius might have penetrated) of the unbecoming Part yourſelf are engaged in, under him; and I muſt no ways omit my Gratitude for the preſent Opportunity you have afforded me, of oppoſing myſelf, to both yours, and your Maſter's Wiles: Then know, Sir, that neither is your Perſon, in my Eye, ſo amiable, or your Maſter's Liberality ſo profuſe, as to diſjoin my Affection from its proper Object, my ever honoured and loving Huſband, Lord *G--r--d*.

I MAY, without the leaſt injurious Imputation to my Honour, admit myſelf in Stratagem,

tagem, Artifice, and Perjury, unequal to cope with either of you; but added I, I have an Heart that can never be ſubdued, whilſt I am proſecuting a juſt and laudable Cauſe. This Heart I can look into with Delight and Tranſport, where every Corner preſents me with an Aſſemblage of Truth, Innocence, and Virtue; whilſt thine, alas! poor Wretch! will not endure a Scrutiny; nor canſt thou view thyſelf, or thine own Thoughts ſeriouſly, without Diſtraction at their Deformity.

YOU, and your Aſſociates, may ranſack Hell itſelf for Plots ſo deep as to affect my Life; but then my Honour, my Integrity, my Claim to Lord *G--r--d*, will ſtill remain unimpeached and irremoveable.

LET your Employer know, added I, that his Inſtruments are too feeble, to move an Heart like mine, fixed upon the ſolid and unerring Principles of Truth and Conſtancy. Let him grind his Teeth for Anguiſh, that his Contrivances are placed in ſo weak Hands as are to be baffled by a Woman.

LET him know alſo that I contemn his Threats, diſpiſe his Offers, laugh at his Artices, and all his vileſt Malice ſucceeding againſt me, ſhall meet either Death, or Bonds, with that Chearfulneſs his perplexed Conſcience muſt ever be a Stranger to. Nay, come the worſt that can befal me, in Maintenance of my Integrity, I can walk the Streets of *Dublin*, in firm Dependance on the Direction of Providence, for my Support, to be collected from the Liberality of its Inhabitants.

NOTIFY

NOTIFY this my Reſolution to your Maſter, and intreat him, if he is able, to ſupply his Agents with ſome Balſam, that may allay the Twinges of a feſtering Conſcience, againſt you enter upon your Soul-deſtroying Practices, that the Anguiſh attendant on his Service, proves not paſt all Toleration.

Go, thou curſed, black, deteſted Hell-hound, ſaid I, ſhroud thy Tortures beneath the ſable Covering of thy Patron's Favour. Begone, I ſay, proceed to your own Deſtruction, and leave me to the Guidance of that Providence, which, beholding my unjuſt Sufferings, will recompence my Innocence.

Stringer would fain have replied, but I put a Stop to it, by calling in Mrs. *Newburgh*, and would hear no more; when muttering Deſtruction againſt me, he quitted the Room.

I INFORMED Mrs. *Newburgh* of all that had paſſed between us, whilſt the poor Woman ſtood trembling for my Danger. She then plainly told me, that the Caſe was, in her Opinion, ſo extraordinary, and conſiſted (according to my Report) of ſuch a Complication of diabolical Miſchief, that had ſhe not been exceedingly prejudiced in favour of the Relator, ſhe ſhould ſcarce have credited it; nor were there many People on whom ſhe could have confided, in the like Inſtance.

IF this was the Caſe; ſhe ſaid, if ever I ſhould be accuſed by them of a double Marriage, I muſt inform the Court at my Tryal how I had been threatened, and the Reaſon of it, and that the Proſecution was wholly malicious, when ſurely they would diſcredit any Evidence that ſuch a Wretch as *Stringer* could

could give againſt me, and, not improbably, lay him by the Heels for it.

No, no, Madam, ſaid I, the Knave is too well apprized, that whatever a Criminal at the Bar, can offer for himſelf, without other Evidence to corroborate it, will be but eſteemed a plauſible Pretence in his own Favour; and will avail him nothing, either with Judge or Jury; and that, you may be ſure, was his Reaſon for not admitting you at our Conference. Such a Wretch as *Stringer* would not grace his Profeſſion, was he not thorough Maſter of all his Paces in it; for, believe me, there requires no leſs Study and Pains to qualify a Man for a compleat Villain, than for the Magiſtrate that receives his Evidence. No, no, I muſt ſubmit my Cauſe to the only unerring Judge of all Men, and patiently wait the Event.

Mrs. *Newburgh* adviſed me to go directly back to *England*, where I might have a much better Chance for defending myſelf than I could where I was, neither myſelf known, nor could procure my Witneſſes; but I replied, that as it had been to a Demonſtration viſible to me, that not only my coming over had been expected, and myſelf watched from the Water-ſide, by them or their Accomplices, at my firſt Landing; ſo I doubted not, but that every Movement of mine, ſince I had been at her Houſe, had been remarked by them; and that ſhould I be apprehended in my Flight, after their Threats of ſuch Charges againſt me, my Attempt to eſcape them would be muſtered into the Rank of the

my criminal Actions, and probably augment the Rigour of the Law againſt me.

I TOLD Mrs. *Newburgh*, that under my preſent Circumſtances, and under the Privation of my deareſt Huſband, I would perfectly reſign myſelf to the Will of Heaven; for that Life was no ſuch deſirable thing to me, bereft of my Lord and Children, as that I ſhould ſubject myſelf to the leaſt Cenſure for preſerving it, though, at the ſame time, I confeſſed it would grieve me to loſe it by mere Artifice, to the Triumph of my Enemies.

IT was at leaſt ten Days after this, before I heard the leaſt Syllable from either of my Accuſers, (for *Stringer* quitted Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Lodgings the very next Day, after the above Conference between us) when having remained ſo long free from Moleſtation from them, both Mrs. *Newburgh* and I were verily perſuaded, that my Oppreſſors, perceiving me ſo reſolutely to have deſpiſed their Menaces, had deſiſted from their Purſuit, and had dropped their Deſigns againſt me; and that what I had before been threatned with, had but been acted, in order to have ſurprized me into their Meaſures.

HEREUPON, I began in good earneſt to prepare for my Embarkation; but having, as I above hinted, wrote to my Lord's Banker, I purpoſed to wait for his Anſwer, and Remittances, before I went, not only leſt I ſhould prove deficient in Caſh, for my Journey home; but leſt, after my Departure, his Letter ſhould fall into *Stringer*'s Hands.

IT had not proved longer than I expected, before I heard from the Banker; but when I did, it was in ſuch a diſmal Strain, as ſcarce left me Spirits enough to go through with it; but his own Words will fill my Reader with the trueſt Idea of my Diſtraction. The Letter was as follows:

Madam,

I Received your Ladyſhip's Commands, and believe me I ſuffer not lightly in my own Mind, at my Diſability to comply with them; but your Ladyſhip will excuſe my Failure, when I have aſſured you, that about a Fortnight before I had the Honour of yours, I had an Order under his Lordſhip's own Hand ſent me, not to part with any of his Caſh in my Hands, to any Perſon, or upon any Pretence whatſoever, without his expreſs Order for it, firſt had; and this, Madam, I hope will prevail for your Pardon, in that I comply not with the Contents of your Laſt to me.

I HAD heard that his Lordſhip was either juſt going, or gone abroad; but fearing he might, through Forgetfulneſs, have omitted the Care of his Houſhold, I ſent my Servant as you deſired, with the thirty Pounds for your Ladyſhip's Houſekeeper; but his Anſwer to me, upon his Return was, that your Ladyſhip's Houſe was ſhut up, and that upon Enquiry into the Reaſon of it in the Neighbourhood, he was informed, that the Goods had all been ſold by public Sale, and that the Servants were all diſmiſſed.

I AM

I AM to inform your Ladyſhip further, that none of the Notes you mention to have loſt, have as yet been at my Shop for Payment; but ſhould any of them arrive, I ſhall be ſure to ſtop them, and that I may act the moſt beneficially, that at preſent is in my Power for your Ladyſhip's Intereſt, if you pleaſe to command me where, I will remit the Money upon them to you, in caſe the Bearer cannot prove them his real Property, honeſtly come by.

I remaian,

Your Ladyſhip's,

moſt obedient Servant,

P—— B——

MY Heart was now ready to ſplit, nor had I either Time or Strength for Reflection, my Ideas barely paſſing through my Mind, and ſcarce leaving the leaſt Trace or Impreſſion behind them; ſo that perceiving myſelf unequal to the Taſk impoſed on me, and that the Exigency of my Affairs required a cooler Head, and leſs intereſted Judgment for their Direction, I called in Mrs. *Newburgh* to my Aſſiſtance. O! Madam, ſaid I, holding the Letter in my Hand, what a Shock is here! You have heard my Story, and as one Misfortune ſeldom advances without Attendants at its Heels; pray read this Epiſtle.----- You have been apprized of the Purport of mine to the Writer of this.----Caſt your Eye upon his Anſwer.-----O! why am I ſuffered

to ſubſiſt, under this Inundation of Adverſity.

THE good Woman having peruſed it, turning to me, Madam, ſaid ſhe, I can but pity your Ladyſhip from my Soul. Your Caſe is truly deplorable; but how comes it to paſs, if, as you ſay, there is ſo good an Underſtanding ſtill between his Lordſhip and you, that he ſhould have been prevailed with, ſo poſitively to oppoſe your Receipt of any farther Supply from his Banker? I ſhould be apt to think *that* the moſt ſevere Article againſt me, was I in your Place: As to the preſent Want of Caſh you may be in, give me leave to preſume, that, not to be paſt Remedy.——If your Ladyſhip would pleaſe to purſue my Advice, it ſhould be to hasten your Voyage to *England*, where no doubt, but the Laws will ſee you have Juſtice done you: For if Lord *G-----r-----d* is poſſeſſed of the Eſtate you have mentioned to me; the Courts will never ſuffer his Lady to remain in want of a reaſonable Competency from it, for her Subſiſtance, ſhould his Lordſhip be ever ſo much prejudiced againſt you.

DEAREST Mrs. *Newburgh*, replied I, you are no ways to conceive of this as my Huſband's doing, whoſe Perplexities, I am ſatisfied, are equal to my own, at this our preſent Separation.----No, I am now perſuaded, that the Letter which firſt prevailed for my Voyage hither, was a Forgery, as muſt alſo that be, which my Banker ſuppoſes he has received from his Lordſhip; they are, they muſt be Counterfeits. No, no, my deareſt Lord would exhauſt his whole Heart's-blood

to

to ſerve me; would he then, think you, have denied me a trifling Conſumption of his Caſh? Impoſſible! but where to find him, that Thought diſtracts me; he may be waſting his precious Life in Durance, and ſubject to Evils, far tranſcending thoſe I ſuffer; for nothing leſs could have detained him ſo long from my Embraces.

O! Mrs. *Newburgh*, added I, his Lordſhip hath a Soul ſo pure, Sentiments of Affection ſo refined, and towards me ſo permanent, that nothing leſs than unavoidable Neceſſity, could have obſtructed his finding me above Ground, in all this Time; nor ſhall I enjoy an eaſy Moment, till I have induced you to ſhare Sentiments with me, relative to my ever dear Huſband; but I will be perſuaded by you, and gain the *Engliſh* Shore with my beſt Expedition: For that it will be impoſſible for me long to ſubſiſt here, upon my ſmall Stock.

MRS. *Newburgh*, aſſiſting all that was in her Power, preparatory to my Return, (for having neither Linen, Silk, or Woolen, beſides what was on my Back, ſave ſuch as I from time to time borrowed of her) I had furniſhed myſelf with a ſmall Change of Things, and had only to beſpeak my Paſſage; and for that Purpoſe, I ſet forwards the next Day in Company with Mrs. *Newburgh*, who was acquainted with ſeveral Maſters of Veſſels, to pitch upon one, who ſhe could warrant to prove faithful to me; for I had been ſo baſely dealt by, that I even miſtruſted every Man I had any thing to do with; but we had not proceeded more than half Way, be-

fore I was ſurrounded by a Gang of Fellows, with a Conſtable at their Head, and forcibly dragged before a Magiſtrate.

At my Appearance before him, my Senſes were ſo ſhocked at the Notion of being deemed a Criminal, that I had nothing in Nature to alledge in my own Juſtification; but my Adverſaries being in much higher Spirits, and both poſitively ſwearing, each to his having married me, a very ſlight Examination enſued, before I was committed to the public Jail, to take my Trial at the next Seſſions, with the common Malefactors.

CHAP. XV.

Biddy's *Treatment from her Fellow-priſoners. Under-keeper's Deſcription of his Wards.* *Mrs.* Newburgh *viſits* Biddy. *Agrees for her better Accommodation. Enters upon it.* Stringer's *Viſit overheard by the Keeper's Wife.*

THINK, ye, into whoſe Hands theſe Sheets may hereafter fall; Think, I ſay, if it be poſſible, for you who have never undergone the like Trials, the Terrors of my Apprehenſion, in the loathſom Reſtraint of a common Priſon, amidſt the Oaths, the Blaſphemies, the Execrations of ſuch an abandoned Crew, as then ſurrounded me, in the Women's Ward there.

My Griefs were ſo unutterable, as to drive me into one of the moſt obſcure Receſſes of the

the Place, where free from the Intruſion of my deſtined Companions, and ſecluded from my own Species, I might ſilently indulge the Torrent of Woe, which I began to feel too mighty for my Spirits to conteſt with; for a ſlight Taſte of the inſupportable Speeches and Behaviour, of my unreflecting Aſſociates, ſoon made me moſt anxious for avoiding them.

I HAD not been long ſecreted in my deſirable Obſcurity, before two of the moſt abandoned, and deteſtable Wretches of my own Sex, finding me alone, and diſtant from the Reſt of the Gang, ſwore, that no one ſhould partake of a Lodging, which they had appropriated to themſelves, without paying for it; and immediately caſting me along upon the Floor, forced my Purſe from my Pocket; but indeed, without any great Matter of Reſiſtance from me: For the Terror I ſuſtained under their Handling, had rendered my feeble Oppoſition but inſignificant to them.

NO ſooner had they ſpoiled me of all that I had, than in a flouting Manner, exulting over me; Your Ladyſhip, ſaid they, may now pleaſe to riſe and be good Company: For whilſt you had a Penny in your Purſe, I ſuppoſe, you held yourſelf too good for our Society. Come, come, riſe I ſay, and be good Company; we have no Degrees here, of gentle and ſimple; then ſhew yourſelf one of us, now you are liſted into the Troop, where all are upon the Level.

WHILST I was bemoaning myſelf alone, under a Senſe of this ignominious Treatment, and regretting the Loſs I had ſuſtained, with-

out the leaſt Proſpect of a Redreſs; the two Women returned, with a Number more of their Siſterhood, and with them a large Bottle of ſpirituous Liquor. They all drank to me, wiſhing my Ladyſhip Health and long Life, intimating, that they had been informed how fair a Chance I ſtood for Preferment at the enſuing Seſſions. They then preſented me with ſome of their Liquor, in a naſty Pewter or Tin-veſſel, aſſuring me of what Comfort I ſhould find it under my Affliction, it being an abſolute Specific, they ſaid, againſt Vapours and Low-ſpiritneſs, which they took to be my Diſorder; but I refuſing it, with ſome Deteſtation, it was directly thrown into my Face, and, as I verily thought, from the Exceſs of Miſery it reduced me to, would have burnt one of my Eyes out.

I TOLD them, that they were welcome to my Caſh, and that I wiſhed them merry with it, if it was poſſible ſo to be in that diſmal Place; but added, that were their Souls ſo heavy as mine, they would be as little diſpoſed for Jolity as myſelf; and intreated them to leave me to the Bitterneſs of my own Reflections.

D——N the B——h, how ſhe cants, ſaid one of them. Her Ladyſhip's Spirits are a Cup too low, ſaid another. Fill her a Bumper, cried a Third; then again throwing me upon my Back, and wrenching open my Mouth, they forced down my Throat ſuch a Torrent of their odious Spirits, as almoſt ſtrangling me, they left me, to ſtruggle myſelf into Life again, without either Shame or Remorſe.

O!

O! my deareſt Lord! thought I, could you but be appriſed of the Miſeries I ſuffer for you, you could not ſurvive the Impoſſibility of relieving me; but, moſt probably, you are now charging me with equal Concern upon your own Account.

I WAITED in the dark Corner I was then in, for the Remainder of that Day, and the whole of the enſuing Night, till the ſecond Morning; nor had I ever more, by Choice, deſerted it, had not one of the Under-keepers entered upon me, to bring me my Allowance, and rouſed me.

I MADE my Complaint to him, of the ill Treatment I had received from the reſt of my Fellow-priſoners, beſeeching him, that he would permit me to be ſeparated from them, if poſſible, though it were to the moſt direful Dungeon under his Care. O! ſaid I, that it were but poſſible for me to be incloſed in the moſt abject Place, which would but juſt contain my Body, rather than be compelled to an Aſſociation with my preſent Companions, tho' it were in the moſt ſplendid Apartment of the Regal-palace: for my preſent Situation, with them, is far more afflicting to me than Death itſelf.

I SHOULD be extremely glad, I told him, were it in my Power, to gratify him for any Civility that he might ſhew me, but that the Women, my Companions, had violently diveſted me of ſeveral Guineas which I had brought in with me, though that had not occaſioned half the Concern to me that my Subjection to their Company had, whoſe indecent

decent Behaviour, and filthy Converſation, was my utter Averſion.

THE poor Fellow ſhook his Head, but replied, that ſince Fortune had caſt my Lot amongſt them, it was pity I could not rival their Actions; though ten to one, added he, but a few Days will bring you forward; for one of them, and, in my Opinion, the moſt abandoned of them all, was, to all outward Appearance, juſt ſuch another as you ſeem to be, at her firſt taking the Trammels; but ſhe is now as compleat in her Paces, if not more ſo, than any of them; and, in all my Service here, I never met with ſo depraved a Set collected together before.

OURS, added he, is a very thriving Academy; nor have I known many to have been ſo dull within theſe Walls, as not to have commenced Miſtreſſes of Arts before they quitted their Stations, how ignorant ſoever they might have been, at their firſt Admittance here.

I SHOULD be glad, added he, to aſſiſt you, was it in my Power; but am afraid you muſt weather it out with them. You muſt expect your firſt Reception will be a little gauline; but Practice----Practice, I ſay, will render it familiar. Few enter Saints here, but they depart Devils.

THE Coolneſs of the Comfort the Man gave me, together with my twenty-four Hours Subſiſtence, ſunk me again into ſuch inexpreſſible Calamity, that I might literally ſay, *My Bread was mingled with my Tears*, nay, well-ſoaked in them; for my Heart was well

was well nigh rent aſunder at the Contemplation of what Scenes were to ſucceed.

IN the Afternoon the Compaſſion of that humane Woman, Mrs. *Newburgh*, brought her to pay me a charitable Viſit; but upon her firſt Introduction to my female Companions in the Outer-Room (for I kept myſelf altogether in a dark Receſs backwards) their Greeting furniſhed her with ſuch a Diſreliſh to their further Acquaintance, that, turning upon her Heel, glad ſhe was to retire out of their Clutches, and entering the Keeper's Apartment, begged the Favour of my being admitted to her there.

MRS. *Newburgh* had been ſo old an Inhabitant in *Dublin*, that ſhe was not only perfectly known to the Keeper, but to his Wife too; which latter had lived Servant in her Brother's Family; ſo that relating to her my hard Fate, and her Intent of viſiting me in the Place of my Confinement, had ſhe not encountered ſuch forbidden Company by the Way, the good Woman prevailed with her Huſband for bringing me out to her.

NO Mortal can conceive the Tranſports of my Soul, at the News of Mrs. *Newburgh*'s friendly Arrival; but no ſooner had I heard that I was (though but for a Moment comparatively) to be enlarged and ſeparated from my horrid Reſtraint, and from my more horrible Companions, than my Extaſy became unutterable.

MY Gratitude for that kind Creature's Concern for me, a wretched Being caſt out by Fate, and deſtitute of all other human Aſſiſtance, ran ſo high, as to reduce me to my

my Knees before her; where, embracing hers, I was, for a time, incapable of expreſſing my Senſe of her Benevolence, but by my Tears.

THE loving Woman, ſympathizing with me, intreated me to be comforted, hoping, ſhe ſaid, that I ſhould ſtill live to trample over my Oppreſſors, and baffle all their Attempts againſt me. O! Mrs. *Newburgh!* replied I, you are ſenſible how I have been beſet by baſe deſigning Villains; what Pains hath been taken to render me culpable in the Eyes of the World, and to reduce me beneath the Compaſſion of my Fellow-Creatures; how my Goods have been embezzled, my Subſiſtance ſtopt, and my Baggage plundered, and falſe Witneſſes have ariſen againſt me, charging me with Crimes not only in themſelves improbable, but alſo ſuch as it were impoſſible I could be guilty of, but through a Privation of Senſe of Modeſty, Honour, and Intereſt.

YOURSELF, Madam, before whom I now ſpeak it, are a Witneſs that my Concern for all theſe Evils, though either of them ſingly, ſufficiently diſtreſsful, exceeded not the Bounds of Moderation; nor even could the abſolute Succeſs of the preſent Conſpiracy againſt my Life and Honour, create in my Breaſt a Tythe of the Sorrow, that my Confinement in the Rooms, and in the Sight and Hearing of that Knot of licentious and iniquitous Women, my preſent Companions afford me; and yet, with theſe, I am either conſtrained to conſort myſelf, or they, to an inſufferable Degree, contemn and abuſe me.

O! MY dear Mrs. *Newburgh!* added I, was it but poſſible for me to be removed from their hated

hated Fellowſhip, methinks my Confinement would be as nothing to me, I could ſtill ſubſiſt comfortably, and to my Satisfaction; for it is not Confinement itſelf that could render me unhappy, but the being conjoined to ſuch an Aſſemblage of notorious Wretches, than whoſe Society no Death can be more ſhocking to me.

AFTER we had ſpent about an Hour together, and that I had informed Mrs. *Newburgh*, and the Keeper's Wife, in what Manner I had been uſed by the Priſoners, as that they had plundered me of every Farthing I brought in with me, and had ever ſince been drinking at my Expence; their Hearts were ſo mollified at my Relation, that Mrs. *Newburgh* herſelf gave me a *Jacobus* *, nor ſhall this be the laſt, I can aſſure your Ladyſhip, ſaid ſhe; for though my Income is but ſmall, Innocence oppreſſed, as I am fully perſuaded, yours is, ſhall never ſuffer Depreſſion whilſt I can ſupport you, though in the End, ſo doing ſhould introduce me here to keep you Company; for my Nature will not permit me to remain an indolent Spectator of ſuch Scenes.

TURNING then to the Jailer's Wife, who had herſelf been ſo moved with my Story as to have wept heartily; you, added Mrs. *Newburgh*, have known me and my Family many Years, and are ſenſible, that I ſhould not become an Advocate for this Lady, or intereſt myſelf in her Affairs, was I not morally aſſured of the Injuſtice of her Sufferings, and that her

* A Gold Coin, uſed in the Reign of *James* I. Value 25 Shillings.

Caſe is, literally, as herſelf has repreſented it. Now, give me your friendly Advice; is it practicable for any Means to be uſed for freeing this Lady (I mean not from Confinement, for that I myſelf would become reſponſible for her, Body for Body, as to her Honour, Truth, and Fidelity, but) from that ſo barbarous Society of her Fellow-priſoners?

THE good Woman replied, that her Huſband's Bread depending upon the ſafe Cuſtody of his Priſoners, as the Lady had been committed for a Crime which might prove capital, it would be a dangerous Experiment to venture ſuch an one in any other Hold than what the Government had appointed for them, leſt, by affording them an Opportunity for eſcaping (ſhould they make uſe of it) himſelf ſhould be condemned by his Superiors, and deprived of the Means of his future Subſiſtance.

MRS. *Newburgh* collecting from this Speech of the Jailer's Wife, that it lay wholly in her Huſband's Breaſt to ſecure me in what Part of the Priſon he pleaſed, and that my Forthcoming at the Seſſions was what he had, principally, to be concerned about; for that his own Suffering, in caſe of my Eſcape, was the ſole Motive to prevent my Reſtraint from being tranſferred to his own Apartment only; and reaſoning with herſelf, that it being in the Body of the Jail, there could be but little Danger of my Elopement, ſhe deſired that the Keeper himſelf might be called to her.

SHE ſtated the Nature of my Caſe to him, the Perſuaſion ſhe had of my Innocence, and her Senſe of the Honour ſhe was aſſured that I poſſeſſed, with the Rank I bore in Life, and Difficul-

Difficulties I endured in the common Women's Ward; for all which, after many other Arguments produced in my Favour, ſhe, at length prevailed, for withdrawing me from the Situation I ſo much abhorred, into his own Apartment, provided that herſelf, and alſo her Brother, who was a Merchant of great Eminence in the City, would, in due manner, become bound for my quiet Demeanour, without ſo much as attempting an Eſcape, all which ſhe engaged he ſhould receive Satisfaction in, the very next Morning.

HAVING proſperouſly proceeded thus far, as a Method for my future Subſiſtance, muſt neceſſarily occupy her next Thoughts (for ſhe had before aſſured me, that ſhe would advance ſomewhat weekly for my Diet, ſuperior to the Priſon-allowance) ſhe agreed with the Keeper's Wife for my Board with her, at the Rate of ſo much a-week, whilſt I ſhould remain with her; and that they might be engaged to treat me with the greater Civility and Reſpect, ſhe promiſed them a Gratuity, the next Morning.

IN ſhort, though Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Acquaintance with me was not yet of a full Month's Standing, I have often reflected, by what unforeſeen Methods (though Providence ſees fit frequently, for its own wiſe Purpoſes, to depreſs us Mortals) it can ſtill preſerve us from ſinking, till the ſame Juſtice and Wiſdom ſhall again co-operate to our Elevation.

I HAD but little Enjoyment of the latter Part of Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Stay with me, from the Dread I had of her ſpeedy Departure, and of my Return to my old Lodging, nor could

I, without the moſt pungent Suffering, accompany my Keeper to the Ward; but it was a Matter of Neceſſity, and comply I muſt.

I ENTERED it far more heavily after this little Enlargement, than I had done at firſt; nor do I believe, I could have ſuſtained myſelf at any Rate, upon the Shock of it; but from the Proſpect I had of its Continuance, only till the next Morning; under which comfortable Reflection, I ſolaced myſelf prodigiouſly.

I WAS no ſooner locked in again, than I had the whole Siſterhood round me, curtſying, and making their Game of my Ladyſhip, (for they ſeemed mighty fond of the Repetition of that Word) I retreated, without a Word of Reply, into my back Apartment again, in the Hope they would then have left me, but their Intent was otherwiſe: For, ſticking cloſe to me, they all accompanied me into it, ſwearing, and uttering ſuch abominable Talk to each other, as the leaſt Idea whereof, is a Scandal to the human Reflection; nor was it poſſible for the lewdeſt, or moſt abandoned of the other Sex, to have exceeded it.

I WAS aſked who it was that had been to viſit my Ladyſhip? I replied, a Friend; and a true Friend. —— A Friend, ſaid one of them, can't expreſs ſtronger Symptoms of Affection, than in Poverty; and I'll be ſworn, her Ladyſhip was as poor as *Job*'s Grandmother when ſhe left us. —— Let's ſee what a Friend ſhe has had, ſaid another; then ſeizing me again, and forcing me along, they flung me down, and beraved me of my *Jacobus* in an Inſtant; but not without my crying out for help, which I had

I had no ſooner began to do, but one of their Fiſts to my Mouth, with a Menace, that for another Word they would cut my Throat, ſoon quieted me.

SURELY never crept Time ſo ſluggiſhly as the few remaining Hours, till I could have Reaſon to expect my dear Mrs. *Newburgh* again. At length it arrived, and with her, to my inexpreſſible Joy, ſhe brought her Brother. They were ſettling the Capitulation, and had near finiſhed it, when I entered to them; where falling on my bended Knees, and delivering myſelf in every Term, whereby I might beſt expreſs my Gratitude, and the Senſe of the Favour conferred upon me, I declared, that in my own imagination, I could behold the Alteration of my Circumſtances, in little leſs pleaſing a Sight, than as a Tranſlation from Hell to Paradiſe.

I WAS then ſhewn my Lodging-room, which was properly, what I could call my own; for otherwiſe, I had the Uſe of the Keeper's whole Apartment, in common with him and his Family. My Room was wholly incaſed with Stone, without the leaſt Ornament to diſguiſe its natural Roughneſs. It had one ſmall Window in it, whereto was faſtened a Caſement, that had formerly, moſt probably, been glazed; and, though my Bed ſtood in ſo ſcanty and dark Dimenſions, as I could by no means lie along in; and my Bed-clothes conſiſted but of little better than a Bundle of variegated Rags; yet my Landlady herſelf, (as I might then call her) being a very humane Woman, and her Proviſions (though no way elegant, yet) wholeſom; I lived to my think-

ing like a Queen, to what I had before done, and being a great Lover of Needle-work, I wrought as diligently at it for my Keepereſs, as if it had been for my Livelyhood; but above all Things, I was extremely nice, if poſſible, never to be abſent, from either the Sight of my Keeper, or his Wife, leſt they ſhould ſuſpect me of meditating my Eſcape.

Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Humanity having prompted her to ſend me a ſmall Shift of Linen, and once or twice a-week favouring me with a Viſit, I am perſuaded, that few People in my Circumſtances, could have rendered the Situation that I was in, leſs irkſome to them than I did; ſave that my deareſt Lord being never abſent from my Mind, for him, and for my dear Children, I never failed of weeping for ſome Hours every Day.

My Landlady had, in a ſhort Time, imbibed ſo advantageous a Fancy for me, on Account of my gentle Demeanor to herſelf and her Family, that after about three Weeks converſe together, both ſhe and her Huſband grew quite careleſs of me, and numberleſs Opportunities had they afforded me of eſcaping; but my Integrity to my dear Sureties, now more eſteemed by me than Life itſelf, had prevented my Encouragement of the leaſt Suggeſtion, that Way tending; nay, as an Inſtance of my Keeper's Confidence in my Honor, I having not ſeen Mrs. *Newburgh* for one whole Week, and beeing exceeding uneaſy at it, and deſirous of ſending an Enquiry after her Health, he told me, that as it was then dark, and no one would know me if I mobbed up, I might go to her myſelf if I pleaſed: For that

that he was under no Apprehenſion of my not returning.

I MUST confeſs, the Confidence he would have placed in me, gave me the Height of Satisfaction; but I declined the Favour, aſſuring him, that ſo long as there exiſted but a Poſſibility of his being drawn in queſtion upon my Account, however unlikely or improbable it might be, I could no ways reconcile to myſelf any Meaſures, which might but eventually redound to his Prejudice.

IN about the ſixth Week of my Impriſonment, *Stringer* came to pay me a Viſit; but no ſooner had I heard his Name, (for I had given a Caution to my Landlady not to ſuffer any one but Mrs. *Newburgh* to have Admittance to me, without previous Notice) than I refuſed him any Conference with me; till after long Intreaty for that Favour, and inſiſting that his Viſit was ſolely deſigned for my Benefit, I at length permitted him to be introduced; my Landlady, at my Requeſt, having firſt planted herſelf in a little Cloſet in the Room, properly, for obſerving all that ſhould paſs between us.

AT the firſt Sight of me, in that wretched Place, whom he had often been obliged to in much higher Life, vile as he was, his Heart could not refrain from melting, as I could plainly diſcover, through every of his Artifices to conceal it from me.

AFTER a ſhort Pauſe to recover himſelf, he began upon the ſame Topic, uſhered in by the ſame Motives, and ſupported by ſimilar Arguments as at his laſt Diſcourſe with me; for which Reaſon, I ſhall not here again repeat

peat them; but I boldly aſſured him, that his Politicks were too coarſe for producing any deſirable Effect from me.

Stringer, having hitherto ſo lowered his Voice, that I was dubious whether my Landlady had heard him or not; I proceeded in ſomewhat a louder Strain than I had before uſed, and at the ſame time walking about the Room, meerly that he might be excited ſo to raiſe his Voice as to be heard by her, I accoſted him in the following manner.

YOU, Mr. *Stringer*, ſaid I, who appear here as a Lover, methinks, ſhould have begun your Addreſs in a more elegible Manner. Was there ever a Suitor on Earth before, that in order for his Miſtreſs the more ſmoothly to accept of his Application, and that he might the more readily know where to find her, laid her in a Jail? Methinks, you ſhould rather have preſented me with the Diverſions of the City; delighted my Palate with Elegancies; flattered my Senſes with Muſick, and mollified my ſtubborn Heart, but even an affected Complaiſance, rather than have taken this rough Courſe with me? Or did you imagine that my Morals, when ſufficiently vitiated in this Cloyſter, would be reduced to greater Pliancy with your Purpoſes?

MADAM! replied *Stringer*, no Mortal breathing can pay a greater Deference to every your Ladyſhip's Perfections than I do; and but that you purſue Means moſt unfriendly to yourſelf, in Contradiction to my every Argument for your Advantage, I could adore you. Was ever Paſſion more predominant,

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in a ſingle Inſtance, among Mankind, think you, than mine is for you? Have I not run all Hazards for you? Have I not met with the ſevereſt Treatment? Born it patiently? ſubmitted in every Inſtance, to whatever you have inflicted upon me? And now, what but your own Sake, and my overbearing Love for you, can move me, to the End I am now aiming to gain you by?

YOUR Ladyſhip is not to ſuſpect me as a Perſon greedy of injuring you. You muſt, in viewing me, behold a Lover, endeavouring to free you from the Oppreſſions of an injured Father, inwardly gauled, for the Prejudices which his Son muſt ſuſtain from his Marriage with you. The Earl of *B----n*, could marry Lord *G---r---d* to-morrow, to above ninety thouſand Pounds Advantage, did not your Ladyſhip intervene. Then, if you love Lord *G---r---d*, why will you oppoſe his ſo apparent Advancement? Eſpecially, when, (and I hope I need not be ſuſpected of Flattery, ſhould I ſay) you may in me, find another Huſband, no ways his Inferiour, ſave in Fortune; whereby, you will not only reſtore Peace to an aged Father, but render both yourſelf, and me, happy, and his Lordſhip qualified, for that Obedience, he cannot now pay to an indulgent Parent.

HAVING drawn from *Stringer*, ſufficient, as I conjectured, for my preſent Purpoſe, I ſignified, that the Subject being diſagreeable to me, I deſired his Abſence, for that I choſe to be in Private: But he replied, that as I had permitted him ſo far, he ſhould be loth to depart, without ſome Hope, of at length prevailing

prevailing with me, and preſſed for my peremptory Anſwer.

I REPLIED, that his Errant to me, though myſylf made ſo light of it, was of a Nature not to be replied to, but after mature Conſideration, which having never as yet given it, I muſt defer all further Reply, till another Opportunity.

WHEN? O! when, deareſt Creature, ſaid he, will you command me, on my Knees, to receive the Bleſſing? I told him, that as I was always at home, he might be ſure of finding me a few Days hence: For that I muſt have a little Time to myſelf firſt.

HAVING appointed a Day and Hour for his Return, he would fain have ſaluted me at parting; but I poſitively forbid that Familiarity, having already played a moſt undeſirable Part, in affording him even the Hope I had done; but it was with a View of making further Uſe of him, ſhould I afterwards find it neceſſary.

So ſoon as he had taken his Leave of me, I called out my Landlady from her Retreat, and aſked her whether ſhe had heard us? who replied, that ſhe was perfect Miſtreſs of all that had paſſed between us. Then lifting up her Hands and Eyes; was ever ſuch a Train laid, ſaid ſhe, to draw in any young Creature to her Ruin? What think you? ſaid I, Mrs. *O Carrol*, (for that was her Name) is that Man my Huſband? He is mine equally, replied ſhe; but if I may take his own Word for it, Lord *G--r--d* is. And are you to undergo a Trial for marrying this Man? I replied, it was what I was ſent thither

ther for, and that my other Huſband was to prove juſt ſuch another Marriage with me, as this could; ſave that he varied from this in one Circumſtance, which was, that I never beheld his Face till the Night of my landing in *Dublin*; whereas, I had known this for a conſiderable Time before.

MRS. *O Carroll* aſked me, how it could be poſſible for them to prove their Allegations? I may as well enquire that of you, ſaid I, not that I in the leaſt diſpute their good Will in aiming at it; nay, each of them hath ſworn me to be his Wife, already.

I AM heartily ſorry, ſaid ſhe, that I cannot appear as a proper Witneſs for you; but fear it might rather prove prejudicial to you than otherwiſe, to have the Keeper's Wife before the Court, as a Liſtener; but as he will certainly be with you again at the Time appointed, it may not be amiſs for you to have ſome one here, ſhut up in my Cloſet, who may make proper Remarks for you, and that they may be ſure of the Perſon who ſpeaks to you, I will have an Hole bored, in a Part of the Partition, where I myſelf whilſt I ſat there, judged it would be moſt convenient, for ſeeing who and who were together.

I WAS not long in appropriating that Service, in my own Mind, to good Mrs. *Newburgh*, as a Perſon of Credit, well known, and than whom, no one could deliver her Story to more Advantage. I ſent therefore for her, and acquainting her with my Requeſt, ſhe readily accepted the Poſt, at the ſame time hinting, that as two Witneſſes were better than one, ſhe would bring her Niece

Niece with her, a very ſmart young Lady, and one, who in Affairs of Love, ſhe ſaid, would probably, prove far more circumſtantial than herſelf; then, having a quicker Memory too, would be more apt, at the Recollection of all Particulars.

CHAP. XVI.

Stringer's *ſecond Viſit to* Biddy. *Diſcourſe overheard by Mrs.* Newburgh *and her Niece.* Biddy *prepares for Trial. Is put off. Mrs.* Newburgh *ill at next Seſſions. The Indictment proved againſt* Biddy. *Her Defence. Juryman knows* Biddy. *Proſecutors taken into Cuſtody.*

THE appointed Day being arrived, Mrs. *Newburgh* and her Niece were with me, and we had all prepared ourſelves for our ſeveral Parts, upon the firſt Notice of the Approach of *Stringer*. We waited not long beford he, by the Servant, craved Admittance to me; then placing Mrs. *Newburgh* and her Niece, where they could both be Witneſſes to every thing which might paſs between us, I ordered him to be introduced.

I SHALL not tire my Reader with the complimentary Part of our Dialogue, but proceed to the material Part at once. I brought him to an Acknowledgment of the Earl's firſt Knowledge of, and Perturbation at, his Son's Marriage with me; the Offer he had made me, if I would quietly relinquiſh

quiſh my Claim to Lord *G--r--d*, and that the Scheme of marrying me to him [*Stringer*] was in order to have my ſecond Match as a Security for my Silence as to that with Lord *G---r---d*, and then he preſſed me over and over to marry him, from the many Advantages which would every way redound from it.

UPON my demanding how he could have the Confidence to declare publickly, at Mrs. *Newburgh*'s, that I was his Wife; dear Lady! ſaid he, it had ſo been concerted with the Earl, before my coming over, and that I ſhould, if poſſible, decoy you to my Bed, little doubting, but could I compaſs that, you would afterwards be much more compliant to Marriage with me.

HE ſaid it had likewiſe been concluded, that ſhould he fail of his View in bedding with me, he was to declare me to be his Wife; and that *Player* (who was a poor Weaver, though gentilized upon that Occaſion) ſhould alſo claim me as his Wife; when, if their Menaces would no ways terrify me into a Marriage with him, they were both then to proſecute me for Bigamy, and ſwear themſelves ſeverally married to me.

HOW was it poſſible for you, Mr. *Stringer*, to play the Villain in the groſs Manner you have related, for the ſake of any Man's Favour or Intreaty, to the utter undoing of your own Soul? Madam, replied he, Love, like mine, admits no Bounds; nor can it be confined, though Hell itſelf lay open to me. Your Cruelty has already diſtracted me, and whatever ſhall follow, muſt be imputed to that as a neceſſary Conſequence.

And, Madam, added he, whilſt a Man lives in this World, he bears about not only a Soul but a Body too; neither in his Regard for that muſt this be neglected. It muſt eat, muſt drink, and muſt have where to lay its Head.

I am afraid, Mr. *Stringer*, replied I, that after the Execution of theſe wicked Devices, wherever you may lay your Head, you will find but an uneaſy Pillow; but how if what you have now publiſhed to me, ſaid I, ſhould hereafter riſe up in Evidence againſt you? *Stringer* then looking about him, replied, that he thought himſelf very ſecure in that reſpect, unleſs I ſhould ſummon thoſe Stones (pointing to the Walls) to bear Teſtimony for me.

He then urging my Conſent to marry him, without more ado, and thereby procure my Diſcharge; pray what will Mr. *Player* ſay in that caſe? demanded I; how will he take it? Dear Lady! ſaid *Stringer*, joke not at my Sollicitude. Tho' the World knows not but that he may be your Huſband, and he will, nay hath ſworn himſelf ſo to be, you and I are better adviſed than to credit him; nor will there then be the leaſt further Occaſion for his Proceedings againſt you, the End for which we are both obliged to perſecute you being anſwered, ſo ſoon as you are my Wife. Come, come, dear Lady! make both yourſelf and me happy. As for Lord *G---r---d* you can have nothing to fear from him, in a Point that will prove ſo grateful to his Father.

I was juſt then about to have diſmiſſed *Stringer*, under ſome ſmall Expectation of his having made a further Progreſs in his Suit with me, that in caſe we ſhould have found him

him further neceſſary, I might not have been without Hope of a future Viſit from him; when Mrs. *Newburgh*, who was, through Corpulency, pretty purſy, being tickled by the Noſe, and unable to ſtifle it, ſneezed two or three times very loudly. *Stringer* hereupon turning pale as Death, and ſtarting, What! who is that? ſaid he. Some body in the next Room, replied I. But he, all Sſupicion, running to the Cloſet-door, and opening it, gave immediate Liberty to good Mrs. *Newburgh* and her Niece.

So Madam! ſaid the Villain, with the moſt inſolent Air of Aſſurance imaginable, are you turned Eves-dropper? And pray, Miſs, what may you have heard worth remembering? ſaid he to the Niece. Came you hither to learn how to make Love, my Dear? No, Sir, anſwered ſhe; to learn how to preſerve my Body at the Expence of my Soul, which happens to prove a new Doctrine to me; but one may live and learn, I ſee.

FIE! fie! Mr. *Stringer*, ſaid Mrs. *Newburgh*, gravely; how can you dare to look me, or that Lady, in the Face, ſince the Profeſſions you have heretofore made in my Preſence? What? ſaid he, you have overheard my Courtſhip, I ſuppoſe! Such Courtſhip, added ſhe, as I ſhudder at; and what there could have been no Occaſion for, had this Lady already been your Wife.

MADAM, ſaid *Stringer*, ſhe is the moſt ſkittiſh Toad breathing. I never lay with her in my Life till after a Courtſhip twice as tedious as this you have overheard; but a Pox on your damned Sneezing, had it not been for which,

ſhe was juſt yielding to me, and we might have been in Bed by this time.

SIR, ſaid I, there can be no Evidence againſt you ſave theſe Stones; what need you therefore concern yourſelf how you have behaved to me alone?

I APPROVE the Joke abundantly, ſaid he; and as it was what I ſuſpected, I had prepared myſelf with a random Story, of a Cock and a Bull, and an Earl, and I know not what, merely for the Amuſement of your cloſeted Gentry: So let them lay their Heads together, and make the moſt of it.----I am in haſte.---- Adieu. —— Then ſnatching up his Hat, he left us, ſeemingly under great Confuſion.

WAS there ever ſuch a conſummate Piece of Cruelty practiſed before! ſaid Mrs. *Newburgh*.----But I am heartily glad I was here; and my Dear, ſaid ſhe, as the Seſſions are now coming on, pray command myſelf and Neice upon your Service. We will go home, refreſh our Memories, and put all into black and white againſt the Trial.

As I had for ſome Time before been preparing for my Defence, I ſent for my Sollicitor to inform him of what freſh Matter I had in my Favour, that he might add it to his Breviate; for I muſt own, I was in great Hopes of a Releaſe from my Confinement; nor would a Conveyance to my Execution have been half ſo irkſome to me as the Thought of a longer Impriſonment; the whole Expence whereof lay ſo heavy upon Mrs. *Newburgh*, who had hitherto advanced every Penny for me there, that I began to doubt its ever being in my Power to return her Courteſy.

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THE Seſſions were now begun; but whilſt I waited in high Expectation of being hourly called to the Bar, my Sollicitor coming to me in the Evening of the firſt Day, informed me, that the Proſecutors having moved the Court, to put off my Trial to the next Seſſions, for want of a material Evidence, who was upon his Journey from *England*, but not then arrived, the Court had granted their Motion.

THIS Intelligence, ſo oppoſite to my Wiſhes, ſtruck me with ſuch Vexation, as to induce a ſevere Fit of Illneſs, which had very near coſt me my Life, and the nearer I apprehended myſelf to my Diſſolution, the more happy did I conjecture myſelf; but I was to be reſerved for ſtill ſeverer Sufferings: For by the Time that I was perfectly recovered, and the Seſſions at hand again, Mrs. *Newburgh* was fallen down in a Fever, and had kept her Bed for ſome Days.

I WAS almoſt at my Wit's End, when I perceived that I muſt be forced on to Trial, without the Preſence of ſo material an Evidence as Mrs. *Newburgh*; for indeed, it could appear to me in no better Light, than that of caſting my Life into the Hands of a Cabal of Ruffians, whom I knew determined to ſeize it all Events.

I CONSULTED my Sollicitor, who applied to my Council for Advice how to proceed, for the deferring of my Cauſe till the next Seſſions, for want of Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Teſtimony; but the Proſecutors, who rejoiced heartily at this favourable Accident, upon my moving the Court for the Purpoſe, ſo effectu-

ally oppoſed me, that the Court would not grant my Requeſt: For they alledged, that the Facts ariſing in *England*, and the double Marriage only to be proved, it was highly improbable, that a Witneſs, altogether reſiding in *Dublin*, ſhould be capable of offering any material Objection, ſo that to Trial I was obliged to go, and to Trial I went; but when my Indictment came to be read, I could ſcarce comprehend myſelf to be the Party Criminal: For I heard that *Bridget Farmer*, alias *Stringer*, alias *Player*, alias *Shepard*, alias Lady *G---r---d*, had done ſo and ſo; and that in ſhort, I was one (if all they charged me with was true) who had long ſince deſerved hanging.

THIS long Bead-roll being ended, the Evidences againſt me were, firſt, a Certificate pretendedly ſent from one of the Pariſh Regiſters in *London*; ſecondly, a Man who ſwore by the Name of *Grimes*, that he was preſent at my Marriage with *Player*, juſt five Years before, which was about the Time the Certificate was dated; that he had for many Years been acquainted with *Player*, and had often been at *Player*'s Houſe, where he and I lived together as Man and Wife.

WELL! what could be ſtarted on my Side, in Contradiction to this poſitive Evidence? For my Part, I had only my own plain Negative to offer, beſides two of my Lord's Letters, that I had, in my Confinement, diſcovered to be in my Pocket, one for me to ſend him the Children to the Earl's, and the other that which brought me to *Dublin* after him. Theſe I produced; but it being demanded of

me

me who could prove them; I was therein defective.

I ASSURED the Court of *Stringer*'s Intimacy with my Husband, Lord *G---r---d*, and but that he was one of my Prosecutors, he could prove his Lordship's Hand minutely; however irregular this might be, *Stringer* desired that he might have a Sight of the Letters, for that his Principle for Justice would engage him to deal faithfully with the Court, though he might not be allowed of as an Evidence. He admitted the Knowledge of his Lordship's Hand; but insisted, that from his long Familiarity with his Lordship, had I been his Wife, he must have knewn it; then casting his Eye on the several Letters, and thence turning them upwards, as an Abhorrence of so vile an Imposition upon the Court, he declared them a downright Forgery.

MY first Marriage being thus indisputably proved, to the Satisfaction of the whole Court, they proceeded to the second with *Stringer*, which he solemnly swore to, at St. *Ethelburga*, in *London*, and my old Maid *Esther* backed him upon Oath of her Presence at the Ceremony.

SURELY, if ever there was an Hell upon Earth, the Court at that Time was it, or so near to it in Resemblance, that it might well have been taken for the true; though the Evidence only were culpable; but as no Place can be so remote, as to exclude the All-seeing Eye, so also was his Direction present there, or I had been absolutely lost.

I WAS now called upon to make my Defence, when Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Niece informed the

the Court, of all that had happened in her hearing, between me and *Stringer*; but ſhe being but about fifteen Years of Age, and delivering her Story in a Sort of Pert, and prejudiced Manner, the Jury gave but little Credit to her.

I HAD yet an Anchor caſt, which I could by no means have expected; and that too, whilſt Matters were running thus terribly againſt me; for that kind Woman, Mrs. *Newburgh*, having received Advice from her Niece, how hard it was going with me, would not be reſtrained from riſing, but at the Hazard of her Life, was brought into Court in a covered Chair, where ſhe not only confirmed all that her Niece had before ſaid, with ſeveral material Additions, but giving her Teſtimony with all Gravity, Judgment, and Perſpicuity, the whole Court began to waver in their Sentiments, as to the Validity of the Proſecutor's Charge.

MRS. *Newburgh* having concluded, the Judge proceeded to ſum up the Evidence on both Sides, and was now about to have given the Jury their Charge, when one of them ſtarting up, Young Woman, ſaid he, pray what was your Maiden Name? I replied, *Bridget Farmer*. Is your Mother living? ſaid he, or your Father? I anſwered, that my Father had been dead many Years, and that my Mother afterwards married one *Thomas*, a Carpenter in *Weſtminſter*, in *England*; whom, though I had endeavoured all that I could to find out, I had not been able, ſo could not be poſitive, whether ſhe was living or not. It is very well, ſaid he.

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THE Judge having indulged him ſo far, ordered him to attend to his Charge, and not run on in a random Story, whilſt he had other Buſineſs to mind. He thereupon ſat down and when all the reſt of the Jury, having laid their Heads together, were prepared for declaring me guilty; this Juryman ſtood up.

MY Lord, ſaid he, with great Deference, I humbly beg, that theſe two Gentlemen the Proſecutors, with their Evidences, may all be ſo ſecured, that they be not ſuffered to avoid the Court.

THIS young Woman now before your Lordſhip, as a Criminal, in the Eyes of all my Brethren, neither knows who is her Mother, or from whom ſhe is deſcended. My Wife brought her up as her own Child, tho' in fact, ſhe is the natural Daughter of as honourable a Lady now deceaſed, as any ſtill ſurviving.

MY Lord, this young Woman, to my Knowledge, went Servant into the Earl of *B——n*'s Family; and there, to my farther Knowledge, ſhe married Lord *Richard G—r--d*, the Earl's only Son by his firſt Lady, with whom ſhe cohabited as his Wife in *Hertfordſhire*, till I left *London*, in which Time ſhe had borne him three Children. What hath happened ſince, I am ignorant; but as what I have offered, excludes all Preſumption of the intended Marriage with *Player*, which is alledged to have been within the Time of her Reſidence with his Lordſhip, I can never conſent to the Condemnation of a Perſon, whom my Conſcience acquits, of every

every Colour of the Crime objected, in manner as she is accused of it.

THE Judge then asked me, why if I had any Witnesses in *England*, I had not brought them over, having had so much Time for it? I replied, that relying on my own Innocence, and the Impracticability there appeared to me, of any one's proving a Marriage which never was made, I was the less anxious for the Consequences, of what the Prosecutors could lay to my Charge.

I THEN declared, that the Letters I had produced were of Lord *G--r--d*'s own Handwriting, or so well counterfeited, as to deceive me by their Similitude; that *Stringer* had acknowledged, they had trepanned away my Servant and Baggage, and that my Fellow-prisoners having stripped me of all the Money I had, at my first Commitment, I had ever since subsisted upon Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Charity to me; but as the Prosecutors had suborned Witnesses against me, which I could not have expected, I doubted not, but had I still Money and Time, I could procure such a Cloud of Evidences of my being Lord *G--r--d*'s Wife, and always cohabiting with him, I would convince every one, that since my Marriage with him, I would never have joined myself to such Fellows, as either of my Prosecutors were.

MAY it please your Lordship, said I, my Want of a Fortune, made me a very unacceptable Match for Lord *G--r--d*, in the Eyes of the Earl of *B* —— *n* his Father, who since his first Knowledge of it, hath omitted neither Threats or Oppressions, to induce

induce me to relinquiſh him; and that they might be aſcertained of my never daring more to lay Claim to him, that very *Stringer* who now proſecutes as a ſecond Huſband, hath formed every Battery, that Policy could deviſe amainſt my Honour; and would I have conſented to his Marriage with me, I might have avoided this Proſecution: For I have been offered, and ſtill might have, any Demand gratified by the Earl, would I ſecure him from future Claim to his Son, by an Intermarriage with another Man.

MY conſtantly refuſing to comply with this, hath put the Earl firſt upon conveying my Children, and Huſband, from my Sight and Knowledge, ſo that I know not where to apply to either: But, added I, as Providence hath ſo manifeſtly interpoſed in my Favour, as to raiſe up the Juryman, whom I know now to be Mr. *Thomas*, tho' under my Diſtreſſes, I at firſt recollected him not; I doubt not your Lordſhip's Indulgence for Leave to ſend for his Wife, if living, who will be able to give the Court and Jury ſuch Satisfaction, as I am perſuaded will convince them of my Innocence.

IT ſo happened, that I was before a moſt humane Judge, who declared in the Face of the Court, that as ſome Shew of Juſtification appeared from my Allegations, though it might be contrary to the Courſe of Proceeding in ſuch Caſes, he would adjourn the Court till three o'Clock; before which Time, he would not take the Verdict, ordering the Jury into Keeping, till that Hour;

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at which Time, if I could bring Evidence of my Innocence, he would ſtill hear them.

Mr. *Thomas* then deſired, that the Proſecutors might be ſecured, to be forth-coming alſo at the ſitting of the Court, which was ordered accordingly, and they were conducted out of Court, all but *Eſther*, who in the Buſtle, had ſlipt her Neck out of the Collar, and was moved off; whereupon his Lordſhip, who from this Incident, began to intereſt himſelf in my Favour, gave ſtrict Orders that ſhe ſhould be produced in the Afternoon.

CHAP. XVII.

Mrs. Thomas *and* Biddy's *Diſcourſe. Lord* G--r--d *in* Ireland. *Mrs.* Thomas *examined for* Biddy. Eſther's *Confeſſion. All goes for* Biddy. *Lord* G--r--d's *Speech to the Judge. Proſecutors ſent to Jail.* Biddy *releaſed. Her Reflections.*

THE Agitations of my very Soul, upon this Act of Benevolence of my Judge, are wholly indeſcriptable; ſo that I ſhall paſs them by without attempting to repreſent them; but what was the Confuſion of my Mind, in a ſtrange Place, not a Soul to diſpatch upon any Enquiry, or to do the leaſt good Office for me, but Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Niece, and myſelf confined from all Aſſiſtance, I might have aided myſelf by, if at Liberty.

Mr

Mr. *Thomas* had, unknown to me, ſent for his Wife, who, in about the Space of an Hour after, preſented herſelf before me; but was ready to die away at the Sight of me under Confinement as a Criminal. We fell upon each other's Neck for ſome Time, as incapable of hearing, as of pronouncing the Anguiſh of our Minds to each other, till having ſtruggled through our firſt Tranſports, ſhe demanded, what in Nature could have reduced me to my then preſent melancholy Circumſtance? Whereupon I readily opened my whole Caſe to her.

SHE retorted upon me, why would not his Lordſhip then intereſt himſelf in my Favour, when a Word ſpeaking from him would clear me? O! my dear Mother! ſaid I, his Father hath ſome how withdrawn him from me, ſo that I can have no Recourſe to him.

MY Dear, ſaid Mrs. *Thomas*, anſwer me ingenuouſly, is not his Lordſhip at the Bottom of this Proſecution? I aſſured her he was not, nor was it poſſible for him ſo to be, who ſtill loved me with an Ardour far beyond the common Rate of Huſbands; and whoſe Diſunion from me, I might venture to affirm, was of no leſs grievous Import to him than to myſelf.

CHILD! ſaid Mrs *Thomas*, why would you offer at impoſing upon me? I am well certified that his Lordſhip hath an Hand in this Proſecution, or he could never appear ſo tame a Spectator of your Sufferings. Lord! Mother, replied I, don't I tell you that his Father has confined him from me, and that I

am as ignorant where to find him, as he is of my preſent Calamity.

My dear *Biddy!* ſaid ſhe, for ſo I muſt ſtill call you, either you would deceive me, or are yourſelf impoſed upon. I tell you, he carries on this Proſecution under-hand, though he will not appear to be concerned in it; or why ſhould he be in the ſame City, and ſo near you too, and not appear in your Juſtification?

Alas! ſaid I, in ſome Warmth, we ſeem to be at croſs Purpoſes; will it be impoſſible for me to gain Credit, that my dear Lord knows nothing of my Sufferings, or is himſelf nearer to my Relief than *England*, where his Father's Severity detains him, from all Knowledge of me or my Diſtreſſes?

My Dear! replied Mrs. *Thomas*, it will be impoſſible for you to gain my Credit for any ſuch romantic Story, whilſt theſe Eyes aſſure me, that I croſſed his Lordſhip, walking very unconcernedly from the Wate-ſide, as I was haſting hither to you, but being ſo indifferently clad as I was, I did not then chooſe to make myſelf known to him, yet, that it was none other than himſelf, I am moſt certain.

O! my dear Mother! ſaid I, find him, find him, or I ſhall run diſtracted; what! my deareſt Lord ſo near to me, and I know it not! O! that I could but appriſe him of my Sorrows, all would go well preſently.

Mrs. *Thomas* had not been gone above a a Quarter of an Hour upon the Search, before Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Niece came running to me, with Notice of a Gentleman's Arrival

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at her Aunt's, and Enquiry for me by the Name of *Shepard*. Her Aunt, ſhe ſaid, being gone to Bed again, could not ſee him, nor choſe ſhe to diſcover my Misfortune to him too ſuddenly, without my Leave; but Miſs added, that of her own Accord ſhe had demanded whether his true Name was *Shepard?* and who ſhe ſhould tell me wanted me? To which, ſhe ſaid, he replied, that ſhe might let me know, Lord *G--r--d* would pay his Reſpects to me.

MY Joy at the now Certainty of my dear Lord's remaining at no greater Diſtance from me, had almoſt deprived me of my Senſes, and the Freedom of my own Thoughts; but exerting my utmoſt Efforts, I replied, dear Miſs, tell him the Truth, tell him all the Truth, my Confinement, Danger, Diſtreſs, tell him all, tell him I die for the Sight of him; for though I am thus miſerably ſituated for his Reception, yet, can he but meet me here, I am ſatisfied this vileſt of Places will be more acceptable to him than a royal Palace without me.

I WAS under ſuch Impatience for the Sight of my dear Lord, that I was almoſt wild with it; but the Court was now ſitting, and neither Lord *G---r---d*, or Mrs. *Thomas* arrived yet.

THE Judge had no ſooner ſeated himſelf, than he demanded whether I had any thing more to offer before the Jury were called to their Verdict. May it pleaſe your Lordſhip, ſaid I, ſuch Witneſs have I of my Innocence, in immediate Expectation, as I doubt not to clear myſelf by, to the Conviction of all

Mankind. I am glad of it, ſaid the Judge, for I would always have the Guiltleſs vindicated; but let me tell you, it may prove a more arduous Taſk than you are aware of, to overthrow ſo poſitive and numerous Evidences.

By this time I heard a Cry of, make way, make way for the Evidence there; when Mrs. *Thomas* appearing, and being ſworn, depoſed to my Marriage with Lord *G--r--d*, full ſeven Years before, in her Preſence; that he retired to the Country with me, to conceal it from the Earl, and that we were as fond a Couple as ever lived, till ſhe and her Huſband coming to *Dublin*, heard no more of me till that very Day. She added, that ſhe preſumed all would ſoon be cleared up, in the moſt ſubſtantial manner, by Lord *G--r--d* himſelf, who had that Morning appeared in *Dublin*, and would be there preſently.

The Judge then enquiring whether the Witneſs, who had made her Eſcape in the Morning, had been retaken? *Eſther* was produced, and Anſwer made, that ſhe was ſeized juſt going on board of a Veſſel in the Harbour.

Eſther being brought forward, was almoſt terrified to Death, and her guilty Conſcience bore ſo hard upon her, that falling upon her Knees, ſhe begged his Lordſhip to have Mercy upon her, for that indeed ſhe was over-perſuaded to what ſhe had done, by the Allurements of Mr. *Stringer*, and under Promiſe of great Matters from the Earl of *B——n* himſelf. She ſaid it was her firſt Fact, and ſhould be her laſt, ſhe aſſured him.

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AT firſt the Judge apprehended ſhe meant to have begged Pardon for her Eſcape only, till hearing Mention made of the Earl, and a Reward, he became more ſeriouſly inquiſitive into the Affair, and charged her to declare nothing but the Truth. Whereupon ſhe was beginning to diſcloſe the whole Contrivance; when a Murmur ariſing through Court, and every Eye turning to the Door, who ſhould enter but my deareſt Lord and Huſband.

HAVING paid his Reverence to the Bench, the Judge aſked him whether he was Lord *G--r--d?* and whether he was acquainted with the Priſoner at the Bar? His Lordſhip to the firſt replied, that he was the ſame Perſon; but looking round about for me, he ſaw me not, tho' cloſe behind his Elbow, till the Judge pointing to me, his Lordſhip had no ſooner fixed me by his Eye, than his Arms were round my Neck, where he wept like a Child, all the while he was embracing me; but ſoon recollecting where he was, and wiping his Face, excuſe, my Lord, ſaid he, the Tranſports of my Heart, attached to this beſt of Women, by all the ſtricteſt Ties of Nature; ſhe has been my Wife for theſe ſeven Years, daily, by her irreproachable Conduct, more firmly cementing my Affection to her.

WE, my Lord, through the Obduracy of an implacable Father, have been ſeparated for almoſt theſe twelve Months paſt, involuntarily; and if I might be permitted to gueſs at her paſt Troubles, by my own, for that Time, nothing but the Hope of a poſſi-

ble Re-union could ever have ſupported her under them.

Our Hardſhips, and the Difficulties we have encountered, are highly improper for the Ear of a publick Court, in that, through an Expoſure of them, Reflections muſt neceſſarily ariſe, injurious to the ſacred Name of Father; but if I may preſume ſo far, I would inform myſelf from your Lordſhip, what Accuſation hath brought my Wife before you, in this ignominious Manner, as a Criminal? For, my Lord, my Conſcience aſſures me, that her Soul is too pure to commit a Crime, even mentally, to treſpaſs for a Moment there, much leſs would it harbour it till it could ariſe to Action.

The Judge replied, that from as convictive Teſtimony as any he had ever met with, I had been accuſed of a double Marriage, and that his Lordſhip's was not one of them: So that was all true he had that Day heard, I had then three Huſbands in the Court?

In the Court? replied my dear Lord; may I beg your Lordſhip's Order for confronting them. Upon the View of *Player*, who was firſt brought forwards, his Lordſhip declared he knew him not; but deſiring he might be aſked how long he had been married to that Lady, and he replying ten Years, the whole Court was in an Uproar, he having, in the Morning, ſworn it to have been but five, both by himſelf and his Witneſſes; ſo that he was ſet aſide with abundant Ignominy.

Stringer

Stringer then appearing, as my laſt Huſband, though moſt unwillingly; my dear Lord lifted up his Hands, appealing to Heaven, againſt ſo vile an Impoſtor.

Stringer being required to declare when his Marriage with me was had, ſtood ſilent, nor would be prevailed with to expoſe himſelf further, by the Utterance of a ſingle Sentence; when his Lordſhip, in order to caſt a new Light over the Affair, and to recriminate upon the Villain *Stringer*, craved the Judge's Licence, for expatiating ſomewhat upon *Stringer*'s Character; and the whole Court ſeemed ſo big with Expectation of hearing it, that never was there a more profound Silence obſerved, amongſt ſo numerous an Aſſembly, upon any prior Occaſion.

HIS Lordſhip, in a Manner peculiar to himſelf, having lightly touched ſufficiently upon the Obligations *Stringer* ſtood indebted to him for, in order to ſatisfy the Court what Returns ought to have been the Iſſue of a grateful Heart; he diſplayed the firſt Inſtance of his Inſenſibility for ſuch Benefits, in the Attempt he had made againſt his Honour, and my Virtue; then enlarged ſomewhat upon the Return I made him, by the Hands of my Servants. His Lordſhip proceeded to *Stringer*'s Inſinuations to the Earl, his Lordſhip's Father, to our Prejudice; his Stratagems ever ſince to diſtreſs us both; and laſtly, this glaring Inſtance of his Perfidy, by his preſent Attempt, to impoſe upon the Court, and even Heaven itſelf, by his Perjury.

BY this Time, the Indignation of the Court, and of every Member preſent, was raiſed to

ſuch

ſuch an extravagant Height againſt my Proſecutors, that they were beheld with the vileſt Contempt and Deteſtation; and upon his Lordſhip's Requeſt, were all ordered to ſtand committed for their Perjury; having not a ſingle Word to urge in their Juſtifications.

THE Jury then aſſuring the Judge that they were all agreed in their Verdict, declared me not guilty, to the general Satisfaction of the whole Court, and City.

I BEING then, after no few Compliments paid me by the Judge, delivered to the Hands of my deareſt Lord, we were conveyed to Mrs. *Newburgh*'s, with half the City rejoicing in our Tarin, whilſt our Opponents, under a ſtrong Guard, were conducted to my old Quarters, ſubject to the Curſes and Execrations of all who beheld them.

IT is not the Part of a good Chriſtian to exult at another's Misfortunes; but I cannot ſay that I regretted the Condemnation of three of my quondam Fellow-priſoners; two of whom were the Perſons who had firſt robbed me, and the Third was her, who had poured the Spirits down my Throat.

I HAVE frequently, ſince that Tranſaction, reflected on thoſe People's Dealings, relative to my own Particular, with an Exceſs of Commiſeration; though I then beheld them in an extreme bad Light. I have alſo conſidered on the Benefit I have received, from a thorough Exerciſe in Afflictions, and what an Inſight my Troubles had given me into human Nature, beyond what I could ever have attained to, from a Life of Peace and Tranquility; moſt

moſt of which, the wholly Fortunate, are utter Strangers to.

THESE, ſit ſecure, and think, becauſe they condeſcend not to public capital Vices, which may ſubject them to the penal Laws of their Country, that therefore, having ſailed the Ocean of the World, without ever forming Acquaintance with thoſe Ruffles, which wrinkle the Paſſage of others, their full Errand is compleated, and they arrive at the Haven of the Grave, in a deſirable Manner: But I, having made ſerious Obſervations upon Mankind, and been thoroughly ſeaſoned in the School of Adverſity, having remarked the providential Deliverances I have enjoyed, under many of the moſt excruciating Circumſtances, have taken thereby Occaſion for minute Searches, into the Cauſe of all Cauſes, to which, my conſtant Converſe with the Scriptures, under my recluſe State, hath afforded me ſlight Means of Information, as not only to what I ought to avoid, but what I ought to chuſe.

THERE are really ſo many Ways in Life for a Chriſtian to exerciſe himſelf acceptably in, that a Receſs from Vice, without a conſtant Acceſs to Virtue, leaves him but little Title to that Appellation; but how many are there, who wholly neglecting this, paſs under the Character of good, where the Receſs is only from ſuch criminal Acts as may publickly ſtigmatize them, from their Notoriety; though behind the Curtain, both by themſelves, and their Subſtitutes, they are daily practiſing Crimes, as attrocious in their Conſequences, as the moſt daring public Criminal.

I HAVE

I HAVE been enabled, from frequent Intercourſe, with both the Lofty of this World, and thoſe of leſs Eſteem, to form in my own Judgment, a reaſonable Compariſon between them; nor can I at laſt, well elect my Party, to which I ſhould give the Preference.

WHEN I turn my Attention to the Great, theſe, I find, for the moſt Part, free from direct ſtealing from the Perſon, or Dwelling-houſe of his Neighbour; which I ſhould not attribute to their Ignorance of what it is to want, could I but find the ſame Perſons free from Exaction of more than their Due, Retention of the Due of others, or Oppreſſion of thoſe diſabled, from the Slenderneſs of their Circumſtances, from coping with them in fair Conteſt for their own Property, unjuſtly with-held from them.

I FIND the ſame Set of Men, free from downright Murder, either as a Step to procure unjuſt Seizures, or to prevent their future Detection for the Crime committed; but then, to gratify their Revenge, where the Conſequence is the ſame, they only act more behind the Scenes, and under ſuch Covert, as ſcreen them from public Juſtice; which preventing their own Expoſure, contributes to the Conſervation of their Character, ſtill unſullied.

I SHOULD imagine theſe, the Upright of a Nation, acting in Purſuance of Divine Precepts, and conformably to human Laws, from their ſeldom being impeached, for a Defection from temporal Ordinances; did I not ſo often hear them ſwear, know them to be Breakers of the Sabbath, and find them Adulterers,

terers, full of Profaneneſs, and ſlanderouſly miſreporting the Actions of other Men.

NAY, I ſhould behold them as Saints in the World, as juſtly condemning all thoſe Actions, which ſo conſtantly ſubjugate ſome of their Fellow-creatures to the Penalties inflicted by our Laws upon Delinquents; did I not perceive in theſe very Men an almoſt abſolute Neglect of all religious Duties, as well in public as in private: So that when I begin to draw a Contraſt between the great and the mean Parts of the Species, I am not able, by my own Light, to ſay which ſtands faireſt for anſwering the Deſigns of their Creation, whether to conclude upon him, who wanting almoſt all Things, ſticks at no intervening Vice to attain them by; and being in low Life himſelf, condeſcends to low Tricks to arrive at their Fruition, running himſelf into thoſe chiefly, which are, amongſt us, more generally puniſhable; or upon him who, with equal Latitude of thinking, practiſes Vices oppoſite to the direct Honour, as well as Law, of his Maker, though not ſo notoriouſly detrimental to Mankind, as to ſubject him to their penal Statutes.

THESE kind of Reflections have often drawn nearer to a Par, in my Imagination, as to the ultimate View of our living here (to wit, the Exerciſe of moral Virtues, under divine Precept) the Grandees of the Nation, who lord it through their whole Courſes unmoleſted, and thoſe poor abandoned Wretches, my late female Fellow-priſoners, each of them only purſuing the Bent of their Appetites in Life; each of them neglecting the Exerciſe

of

of the divine Principles, which ought to regulate and govern all their Actions; and though theſe more frequently ſmart here below, and thoſe brave it out ſo peaceably till their Diſſolutions; I am at no little loſs to determine, which of them makes the moſt beneficial Exit; they equally neglecting the Will of their Commander, though not all in the ſame Inſtances; for as it is not uncommon for the public Robber to boaſt and glory in that he is not a Murderer; and as the very Atheiſt, that moſt contemptible of all Wretches, may chance to prove the beſt Subject and Neighbour, ſo either the Robber or Murderer may outſtride him, in ſome ſuch Qualification, as may render him, intrinſically, the moſt valuable Man.

CHAP. XVIII.

Biddy's *Fear for her Children.* *Enquires after, and finds them by* Stringer. *Account of the Horror of the Proſecutors.* *Viſit Mrs.* Newburgh. *Lord* G---r---d's *Account of what had befallen him ſince he ſaw* Biddy.

O! the inconceivable Delight that accompanied Lord *G---r---d* and me, when met in private at Mrs. *Newburgh*'s. We were all Joy, all Tranſport, all Love; nor were we capable of expreſſing it by ſuch outward ſignificant Tokens, as our inmoſt Souls ſuggeſted to us; having infinite Endearments ſtill behind, which were not, with inſtant Pro-

Propriety, to be introduced. We wept, we we ſighed, we ſmiled, we embraced, we would have ſpoken, but ſtopt ſhort, with only a piercing Look. We could ſcarce imagine ourſelves together, nor conceive the juſt Cauſe of our Separation; nor could we perſuade ourſelves that the preſent Scene was real. We had forgotten all paſt Difficulties in a Moment, and commixing ſoft Endearments, were all Extaſy.

NEXT to the Enjoyment of my deareſt Lord, my then Enquiry was after my Children, who during our rapturous Elevations, had found no Place in my Memory; but the Reply his Lordſhip made me, that he expected them to have been with me, caſt ſuch a Damp over all my Enjoyments, as almoſt to bereave me of my Senſes.

MY dear Lord! ſaid I, what can have been the Fate of my ſweet Infants? Hath your Father, whoſe Aim hath been my Deſtruction, ſuffered thoſe Suckers from my Root to ſubſiſt? No, no, my dear Lord! as involved in my Guilt, they muſt have been doomed to my Puniſhment.—My Eyes will never behold them more! Methinks their pretty Smiles, which glowed upon their Cheeks, at News of meeting you at your Father's, ſtill dwell upon my Eye!——ſweet Innocents!——they thought no Harm,——and drenched in Love themſelves, took all for Love around them.———Whither may they not have been ſent to!—What may they not have ſuffered!——For my Servant brought me Word from the Earl's, that they went out in his Coach, which returned without them.

His Lordſhip, at my Report, was ſtruck quite dumb; then turning pale as Death, his Silence and Surprize furniſhed me with a Flow of the blackeſt Ideas, relative to his Fears for their Safety. My dear Lord! ſaid I, why tremble you thus? Surely you are apprized of no Cataſtrophe that hath befallen them, which you would ſecrete from me. Then burſting into a violent raving—Alas! my deareſt Babes, ſaid I---Am I now a Mother?———Are you no more? —Are my fond Arms to preſs your tender Limbs no more!----No more infold ye, harmleſs Innocents!----O! my labouring Heart will ſplit. ----My Mind ſuggeſts more than I dare to utter.----O! my Children!----What will become of me!----What is become of you!---- Can I ſurvive this Shock!----They may be murdered!---No, it cannot be.----Babes ſo innocent, what daring Hand could be ſo impious to maſſacre!—They muſt be living!--- But where?—O! where!—Who can preſerve ye harmleſs like a Mother?—A Mother! ſaid I!———Yes, I was a Mother.—— But may be childleſs now.—Where are you caſt, my lovely ſmiling Offspring!—Where foſtered, if the Gripe of Death hath ſpared you!—For, if you have eſcaped the Slaughter, it cannot be that your Grandfather ordained it ſo.

His Lordſhip had ſat wrapped in Reverie, during this Diſplay of my Paſſions; but when I had recalled my Tongue from running on thus laviſhly, my Father, ſaid his Lordſhip, hath not conſented to their Deaths, or counſelled it, we may aſſure ourſelves. I cannot

yet

yet encourage the Admiſſion of a Thought ſo ſhocking. He may have diſpoſed of them to diſtreſs us, but ſtill, I perſuade myſelf, they are living; yet how to arrive at a Certainty, where, I cannot comprehend, without an Application to him for that Purpoſe.

MY Lord, ſaid I, *Stringer* hath hitherto proved your Father's Inſtrument, in every Attempt to our Prejudice, and, undoubtedly, as well knows what is become of them, as he did of your Lordſhip. Let me then intreat you, my dear Lord, rather to pardon *Stringer* all his Villainy, than not to gain the Knowledge of this Point; for to procure his Liberty, you may conclude that he will heſitate at no Diſcovery he can make us.

NO, my Dear, ſaid his Lordſhip, rather let us wait the Time appointed by Providence, for revealing it to us, than for any Gratification to ourſelves, according to the Diſcharge of a Crime ſo offenſive to Heaven, and injurious to human Society as *Stringer*'s. We ſhall but render ourſelves Participants of his Guilt, ſhould we ſuffer it to paſs unpuniſhed.

THOUGH theſe Arguments of his Lordſhip's were convictive of my Judgment, yet could they not quiet the Violence of my Inclination for the Knowledge I ſo much wiſh'd after, nor could I permit it to reſt here; for applying to Mrs. *Newburgh*, from whom I had heard many Reports of the Capacity of of her Brother's Book-keeper, I entreated her to ſend for him, that I might charge him with a Conference I ſhould propoſe between

him and *Stringer*, if he would be ſo good as to engage in it.

THAT good Woman, proud ſtill of conferring any Obligation upon me, procured him for me inſtantly; who being a very ſenſible Man, and coming upon *Stringer*, during the melting Moments of his firſt Dejection, an Hour had not paſſed before his Return, with an Account that he had ſo far ſucceeded in his Negotiation, as to have fixed the Spot of my Children's Reſidence, though *Stringer*, he ſaid, was ſo overborne with Horror, that did his Life depend upon it, he could not name the Town; but as it was impoſſible but his Lordſhip muſt know it, he ſaid, *Stringer* had aſſured him, they were all with the Maſter and Miſtreſs of a Charity-School of the Earl of *B*-----*n*'s Foundation in *Lancaſhire*, which, he doubted not, would be ſufficient Direction to his Lordſhip.

I EXPRESSED the Senſe I had of the Book-keeper's Obligation; and added, that my Condition in *Dublin* had hitherto been ſuch, as had diſqualified me from gratifying him, in the Manner my Inclination tended to; but I doubted not, but before I left the City, I ſhould be capable of returning the Favour he had done me.

As I was turning from him, he begged a Word or two more with me, that he might, on both Sides, candidly diſcharge the Confidence repoſed in him. He ſaid, that the Scene he had juſt then been preſent at, was abſolutely the moſt ſhocking that human Nature could exhibit: For that at his firſt Introduction to the Room of their Confinement,

Stringer

Stringer was lying proſtrate, with his Face to a Stone-floor, ſobbing in the moſt bitter manner imaginable, and every now-and-then, raiſing his Head, he wrung his Hands, and then ſmote his Face againſt the Ground again, in perfect Deſperation.

THAT at the Right-hand of *Stringer* ſtood a Woman, ſtamping and raving, and under the moſt extravagant Flow of Tears he had ever beheld, but curſing *Stringer* with the horrideſt Imprecations that the Fancy of Man could invent.

THAT a well-dreſſed Man was ſitting on the Ground at *Stringer*'s Feet, with his Face buried between his Knees, groaning moſt lamentably, whilſt an elderly, ill-looking Fellow, who neither cried, or raved, walked ſlowly muſing, backward and forwards, as under the moſt conſummate Dejection and Deſpair.

HE added, that the Gloominеſs of the Place, and the different Attitudes of its Inhabitants, wrought ſo upon his Imagination, as that he almoſt conceived himſelf to have entered the Manſions of the Damned, which ſtruck him with ſuch Horror, as at firſt to incapacitate him for any Service, till ſomewhat familiarized to it by Continuance, he raiſed *Stringer* from his Reverie, who, at firſt Glance, looked more like a Demon, than a living Man, his Face being bloated and ſwollen into the ſtrangeſt Form imaginable.

THAT upon an Explanation of his Meſſage, and ſome little Conference with him, he ſeemed all Submiſſion, and then, condemning himſelf for his paſt Tranſactions, he beg-

ged him to aſſure me, that, deſirous of atoning, ſo far as he was able, for his late Miſconduct, he would conceal nothing from me that I ſhould require of him; for that he had but too long been the Dupe of the Earl my Father, againſt whom he then exclaimed moſt vehemently, as the Deſtroyer both of his future Peace in this World, and his Proſpects in that to come; concluding with intreating ſuch Favour from myſelf and his Lordſhip, as the Remembrance of what he had been might occaſion, and that ſome Years of his paſt Life might be wholly buried in Oblivion.

No ſooner was the Book-keeper's Back turned upon me, than running to my dear Lord, and claſping him in my Arms, with violent Emotion; my Children are found, my Children are found, ſaid I; Heaven, amidſt their Parents Sufferings, hath preſerved them, (I hope) for our future Comfort.

His Lordſhip was all Ear for Intelligence, where they could be; preſſing me, without further Preface, to declare it: When I related the whole Paſſage between *Stringer* and the Book-keeper, and that they were at his Father's Charity-ſchool in *Lancaſhire*; with which, as they were ſtill ſo very young, he ſeemed not greatly diſpleaſed; but hoped, he ſaid, as they muſt have been ſent under the Care of ſome Woman of his Father's Nomination, no Accident might have befallen them by the Way.

I AVOIDED all Inquiries into the Manner of his Lordſhip's Detention from me, till the next Day; not being able, either with Attention,

tion, or Patience, to have waited out his Relation, without the Interpoſition of a thouſand Things of my own, all crowding upon each other for Utterance; and in the Morning, his Lordſhip acknowledged, that he had, for the very ſame Reaſon, declined a particular Inquiry into my Affairs, in his Abſence; but we had both promiſed ourſelves an Exceſs of Satisfaction, at indulging over each others Conflicts.

I PAID my Reſpects to Mrs. *Newburgh* the next Morning, when, contrary to my Fears for her Sake, I found her no ways prejudiced, from her Attendance at the Seſſions on my Account; but rather ſtronger, and better than ſhe was before: Inſomuch, that ſhe told me, ſhe purpoſed to riſe, and if her Strength would permit her, to ſit up Part of the Afternoon.

I TOLD her, that if it would not be diſagreeable to her, Lord *G--r--d* had the ſtrongeſt Inclination for paying his Regards to a Lady, to whom he for ever muſt confeſs his Obligations, for the Tenderneſs ſhe had expreſſed for me; to which ſhe replied, that as ſhe hoped to be able to receive him, no one ſhould be more welcome to her.

SHE received us in her Chair, not yet being able to ſtand; but my deareſt Lord, after ſaluting her, became ſo affected by the Sight of one, that for my Sake, he held ſo dear to him, as ſcarce to be capable of forming a regular Acknowledgment of her Favours; till after ſome Converſation with her, he grew not only laviſh of the moſt grateful

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Returns, but in ſo polite a Manner too, as entirely charmed her.

HAVING an earneſt Deſire, that his Lordſhip's Account of his Detention from me, ſhould be delivered in Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Preſence, I then ventured to put the Queſtion, how it was poſſible for him to have been ſecreted from my Knowledge, ſo ſuddenly? And to have been confined ſo cloſely, as not to have had it in his Power to ſend me ſome Account of himſelf?

MY dear *Biddy*, ſaid he, you are not inſenſible, with what Reluctance I anſwered my Father's Summons, for dining with him, in the affirmative, before I laſt left you in *England*; but being arrived at his Houſe, the paternal Affection he received me with, might have betrayed a more ſuſpicious Heart than mine, into the ſame Dilemma that I fell under. He embraced me, as the moſt fond and loving Father: Son, ſaid he, I am ſorry your Affairs cannot be brought to accord to my Inclination, but ſince that is become impracticable, I am reſolved to reduce my Pleaſure to them: For I have been reflecting, that ſince you are pleaſed with them, and as I ſhall probably, have but a ſhort Time to be ſenſible of them, it will behove me to contribute all that in my Power lies, toward as good an Underſtanding between us, as poſſible.

I AM now fully convinced, that your Affections are fixed upon a virtuous Object, which hath no ſmall Share in my Satisfaction, and as what is paſt, cannot be recalled; pray how does my Daughter *Biddy*? And how my little Grand-children? My Bowels yearn

yearn ſo after them, that I could wiſh you had brought them with you, for my Bleſſing.

I REPLIED, that his Words were ſweeter to me, than the Addition of Millions to my Fortune. I preſt his Hand, fell upon my Knees, embraced him, and imploring his Bleſſing, aſſured him, that the glorious Day which had reſtored me to his Favour, ſhould annually be celebrated by me, as the moſt auſpicious Feſtival, during my whole Life: For that no Event could have offered me Cauſe for ſo joyful a Commemoration.

HE ſeemed ſo perfectly free, and in ſuch a Flow of good Humour with me, as diſſipated every Scruple of his Sincerity; and again, longing for a Sight of his Grandchildren, I replied, that if it was his Pleaſure, I would forthwith ſend for them. By all Means, ſaid he, or the Satisfaction he purpoſed to himſelf from Reconciliation with me, would prove but incompleat; and though it might be too much at once, to load himſelf with the Pleaſure, my Wife's Preſence would afford him; yet, when I had previouſly apprized her of it, he would unfold his Boſom to her too, and receive her into it next his Heart.

UPON which, I immediately wrote to you for the Children; on whoſe Entry, had any one but been a Spectator as I was, of the ſeeming Joy my Father received them with, he muſt have concluded, that his whole Soul had iſſued to them, at each fond Period.

HE kept one or other of them upon his Knee, for the whole Time till Dinner appeared; trifling, toying, and remarking upon their every

every Speech, and Geſture; and had they been his own, and himſelf the moſt indulgent Parent, he could not have ſignified his Affection, by a greater Variety of rapturous Expreſſions.

JUST before we ſat down to Table, there came in two Gentlemen, ſeemingly of the Army, by their Dreſs. They were both Strangers to me, but appeared perfectly intimate with my Father; when, to have heard how he laviſhed forth his affectionate Sallies of his Grandchildren to them, who would have ſuſpected them to have been leſs precious to him, than his own Heart's Blood.

DURING our Meal, one of the Stranger's informed my Father, that his Horſes were arrived, and waited his Orders, how he would have them diſpoſed of; my Father ſeemed highly rejoiced, that they were come ſafe into the River, and aſked Abundance of Queſtions about them, and by their Anſwers I ſoon perceived them to belong to the Seas. At length, my Father fearing, he ſaid, that the Fatigue would be too great for him, ſhould he go to look after their Landing himſelf; Son, ſaid he, ſhall I get you to ſupply my Place? For methinks, now they are ſo near me, it would heartily vex one, ſhould any accident happen to them; and Sailors are ſuch ignorant and ſelf-witted Fellows, that ten to one, but they receive ſome Damage, through their Careleſsneſs, without ſome one, with Authority, to overlook them. Theſe Gentlemen will accompany you, the Veſſel lies but at *Black-wall* they ſay, and if I am rightly informed, if I can

can but land them ſafe, there will ſcarce be ſuch another Set in *Europe*.

WHAT leſs could I have done, after ſo many Proofs of his Love to me, than to have offered myſelf to the Duty; nor waited we longer than for the Diſcharge of the Table, before my Father ordering his own Coach to the Door, I took the two Gentlemen with me upon the Expedition, my Father aſſuring me, that if I returned not in proper Time, himſelf would take Care of the Children.

WE quitted the Coach at the *Tower*, and took Oars to *Black-wall*, where we ſaw a very ſnug Veſſel, which I was informed the Horſes were on board of. We were no ſooner on board it, than we were uſhered into the Cabin, where a large Bowl of Punch waited us, the Maſter inſiſting upon our firſt regaling over that a little, before we fell to Buſineſs.

HE plying us ſo faſt, and drilling us on ſo long, under Pretence that the Barge was not yet arrived for receiving them; I began to grow very uneaſy, leſt we ſhould not have Day-light for the Operation; when they, perceiving that I would admit of no longer Delay, conducted me down the Hatch-way, in order to take a View of the noble Creatures, they had before been ſo greatly commending.

HERE it was, that I perceived the firſt undiſguiſed Tokens of my Father's real Affection: For being deſired to walk in a ſmall Encloſure beneath the ſecond Deck, I was there given to underſtand by my Companions, that the Diſpleaſure I had occaſioned to my Father, was to be repaid to myſelf, by Exile: For that I ſhould ſee *England* no more, till my Wife had

had relinquiſhed all Claim to me, and teſtified it, by her Marriage to ſome other Man.

IT is ſcarce to be preſumed, that my Patience ſhould hold out for a further Relation: So that ſtarting into a violent Paſſion, I began to rave and ſtorm prodigiouſly; but was reſtrained from Action, having been deſired to leave my Sword in the Cabin, that being an Inſtrument moſt improper, for deſcending the Ship with.

I SHOULD certainly have murdered one or both of them, could I have accommodated myſelf with any thing adapted for the Pupoſe; but my ſingle Arms, againſt two luſty rawboned Ruffians, whom I now looked upon, as Deſperadoes in Diſguiſe, would but, as I then apprehended, have drawn upon me unavoidable Vengeance, which, as I was ſo entirely at their Mercy, would have proved an egregious Act of Indiſcretion.

I CONSIDERED with myſelf, my preſent Situation; that the Foundation of my Misfortune aroſe from my Father, under whoſe ſole Authority, I doubted not, but theſe Men proceeded. That I was then wholly diveſted of every Means of Aſſiſtance, and muſt therefore implicitly ſubmit myſelf to their Guidance. To reſiſt, would but the more entangle me, and to prevail thereby, would prove impoſſible.

I WAS locked into a little Cabin by myſelf, during theſe Reflections, where I waited for about the Space of three Hours, alone, and in utter Darkneſs; which I preſume, was their Method of ſeaſoning me, for reducing me to a compliant Temper, in Expectation of the like

like Treatment, for repeated Refractorineſs; but as ſtriving againſt the Stream, would not releaſe me from a Moment's Bondage, or procure me the leaſt Reſpite from their Tyranny, I put the beſt Face I could upon it, neither by my Speech or Behaviour, giving them the leaſt Pretence for Maletreatment of me.

WE had now been on board for near a Month; they having promiſed me, that ſo ſoon as we were out of the Channel, I ſhould have the Uſe of the Ship unmoleſted. This proved an extraordinary Solace to me; but a few Days after, as they told me it was, (for I had as yet been bleſſed with no other Light than that of a Candle to divide my Time by) a Letter was brought to me, with Pen, Ink, and Paper, and I was deſired to tranſcribe it.

HAVING peruſed the Contents, and finding them highly diſagreeable to me, I refuſed to engage myſelf in an Affair, of which I could by no Means gueſs at the Conſequence, or poſſibly expect the leaſt Benefit to redound to myſelf from. They ſaid little more, ſave that it muſt be done, and that Time would diſcover who were to be Maſters: Then taking away my Candle, they locked me in, and left me.

ACCORDING to my beſt Gueſs, it muſt have been eight or ten Hours afterwards, that I ſaw either of them again; when they brought me an Allowance of Beef, and a Biſcuit, without the leaſt Word dropt of my Non-compliance, as to the Letter. Being very hungry, I fed heartily upon it, but when done, requiring ſome Drink, I was told, that I ſhould have it when I had deſerved it.

I VERILY believe, they had either ſalted my Meat in ſome extraordinary Manner, or applied ſomewhat worſe to it, meerly to diſtreſs me beyond Meaſure: For that in leſs than an Hour after I had eaten it, I was ſo oppreſſed by Drought, that I thought I ſhould have periſhed. I knocked, I called, I endeavoured to force my Way through the Boards of my Cabin; but all to no manner of Purpoſe, not the leaſt Succour appeared, till my Sufferings were ſo extravagant, that I feared I ſhould have gone diſtracted, to which, my ſo often calling, and raving aloud, had not a little contributed.

AT length, Help arrived; but clogged with ſuch Conditions, as I would have choſen immediate Death, to have avoided; neither ſhould any Thing, but the Dread of lingering for an uncertain Time, in the Wretchedneſs I endured, have ever obtained my Conſent.

THE Letter was again tendered to me to copy, by one of them, whilſt the other held a Jug of Water in one Hand, and an empty Wine-glaſs in the other. I was ſo intent upon the Liquor, that I attended but little to what was ſaid about the Letter; but was ſoon given to underſtand, that all the Satisfaction to redound from that, muſt be obtained, through my ready Compliance with this; ſo that having engaged to perform it, I had a ſmall Glaſs of Water given me, to allay my inſtant Craving, with full Aſſurance of as much as I ſhould deſire, upon the Completion of my Taſk.

BEING

BEING thus, ſo ſorely againſt my Inclination, driven to the Neceſſity of a Performance, I furiouſly engaged therein, for the Gratification that was to ſucceed; and though I ſtrove to conceal my own Hand therein as much as poſſible, that you, my Dear, might give the leſs Credit to it; yet when finiſhed, I was ſenſible, that my Attempt had proved ineffectual: For I could no ways diſguiſe it as I would have done.

O! THE Refreſhment of the ſucceeding Draught, was more eſtimable to me, than all the World beſides could have been, without it. Nature was never ſenſible of ſo ſudden a Tranſition, from Miſery to Felicity. The Letter I have now mentioned, was what brought you hither, for the barbarous Purpoſes you have now been ſo miraculouſly freed from; but it gives me no light Tranſport, in that their Artillery hath been turned againſt themſelves, even in what I looked upon as the moſt infelicitous Part of my whole Tranſactions in Life, that Letter: For had that not been wrote by me, whereby I might have expected you at Mrs. *Newburgh*'s, how could it have been poſſible, in the Nature of Things, for me ever to have ſought you here? And yet, as your coming hither ſeemed ſo neceſſary, in the Courſe of the Proſecution of their black Deſigns, I doubt not but Means would have been practiſed, for betraying you into this Snare, as effectually, as my Letter did; tho' I had perſiſted to Death, in not writing it.

THE next Day they brought me a ſecond Epiſtle for copying, which was to be ſent to

Mr. *B——g*, my Banker, to ſtop Payment of any Money but to my Order; which, as I was in Hopes of his not extending to yourſelf, and my paſt Diſtreſs recurring to my Mind, I finiſhed without further Argument from my Proſecutors, upon my firſt Heſitation at it, than that it was not in ſuch Haſte, but I might defer it till reduced to my late Extremity, if I ſaw fit; the very Dread of which, ſo wrought me to cool Reaſoning with myſelf, that without a Reply, I went through with it.

We were now diſcharged of the Channel, and I was admitted on Deck; but without Arms, and for ſome Days, ſtrictly watched, and locked up nightly; till the Ship, and my Circumſtances on board, growing more familiar to me, I took Notice to my Governors, how unneceſſary the Caution they uſed with regard to me was: For ſaid I, here are ſixteen Hands on board, excluſive of the Maſter and ourſelves; now, is it to be imagined, I am ſuch a Fury, that ſhould a Weapon come to my Hand, I ſhould kill you all, before I ſhould meet the ſame Fate myſelf? Or, ſuppoſe I could, what would become of the Ship, under my Direction? If I could not, then why all this Guard upon me? Can you preſume, that in caſe I am not locked in every Night, I ſhall jump over board, and run away? Whence then proceeds this Childiſh Inſecurity you ſeem to be under, with regard to me?

I am too well aſſured, ſaid I, that I lie at your Mercy, and am, and muſt be too dependant upon your Smiles and Frowns, to ſuffer

ſuffer me to thwart your Determinations: Then ſince my Father hath appointed you my Guardians, and I am to ſubmit to his Will, let us make Life as comfortable to each other as we can, whilſt we are together, and not by an Auſterity of one Side, or a Dread of the other, render our Beings miſerable.

THE Compoſure wherewith I expreſſed myſelf, brought them into my Way of Thinking; from which Time I lay above Deck, and acted like other reaſonable Creatures, under little or no Inſpection.

I WAS fearful of enquiring to what Part of the World we were ſailing, leſt it ſhould give Offence, and on that Account often ſtifled it; but thought I, as that can't long be a Secret to me after my Debarkation, and I can poſſibly make no ill Uſe of my Knowledge in the mean Time, I will put the Queſtion, let what will happen. Whilſt we were all over a Bowl of Punch one Day, and my Governors ſeemingly very merry, I demanded of the Captain, whitherto he was bound?

THE Captain (who, by the Way, I had only heard called by a Cant Name yet) replied, to the Coaſt of *Africa*. To what Port Captain, ſaid I? when, before he could anſwer, one of my Guardians, (who went by the Name of *Johns*, as the other did by that of *Wills*) demanded why that Queſtion? Have you more Buſineſs at one Port than another? I replied, that it was meerly a Matter of Fancy, for want of ſomewhat to ſay, that my Requeſt flowed from; but if it was any ways a Secret, I deſired it might re-

main ſo: For that my Inclination tended not ſo ſtrongly to a Diſcovery, as to put me upon the Trouble of repeating my Queſtion. Nay, nay, ſaid *Wills*, the Conſequence is very trifling, you may make yourſelf eaſy, we are deſtined to an Harbour, whitherto you will never arrive with us.

THAT Sentence, and the Manner it was ſpoken in, ſtruck a Chill to my very Soul: So that no ways capable of a further Participation in their Good-fellowſhip, after waiting for ſuch Time only, as not to be ſuſpected of deſerting them abruptly, I withdrew to my little Cabin, where caſting myſelf upon my little Bed I fell into ſuch a Train of Reflections, as might moſt naturally lead me to a Comprehenſion, of what was deſigned againſt me.

HAVING of myſelf, no Knowledge for foreign Countries, or of their Traffick, Manners, or Cuſtoms; but having often heard of Perſons being ſold for Slaves, and that Death itſelf was preferable to the Severities they were uſed with; I could conceive no readier Application of *Wills*'s Speech, than to a View they might have of diſpoſing me in that miſerable Way.

THESE Conſiderations threw me into ſuch a State of Diſconſolation, as to augment my Affliction, proportionably, to the Number of Years I might in Poſſibility continue in it; till at length, I grew ſo deſperate upon the Conceit of it, that I came to a Reſolution, as the ſafeſt, and ſhorteſt Remedy, to make away with myſelf, directly upon our making Shore.

I HAD

I HAD thought over this horrid Action ſo often, till I had perfectly reconciled, not only the Neceſſity of the Fact, but even the Deed itſelf, under that Neceſſity, both to my Reaſon and Conſcience; and having eſtabliſhed it as my Principle, I became much more eaſy and jocund, for the Time to come; inſomuch, that my Melancholy, which laſted but for two or three Days, and had been imputed by me to Illneſs, was credited by my Overſeers, to have proceeded from that Source only, and was taken no further Notice of.

MY Lord's Relation having taken up ſo much Time, and Mrs. *Newburgh*, appearing to me to have ſat till ſhe was grown fatigued, I propoſed breaking off here, and proceeding the next Afternoon, if it would be agreeable to her. She thanked me for my Concern, and expreſſed how impatient ſhe ſhould be, till his Lordſhip had, in her Preſence, concluded his Narrative.

CHAP. XIX.

Lord G——r——d's *Story continued. Sends for Remittances from* London, *Writes about his Children. Commences Proſecution againſt* Stringer *and the reſt.*

MRS. *Newburgh* notifying her Readineſs to receive his Lordſhip the next Day, we inſtantly waited upon her; when Lord *G—r—d*, without any further Ceremony than her

her Requeſt, proceeded with his Story from where he had before broken off.

We had been upwards of three Months on board, ſaid he, and as I heard the Sailors diſcourſing, were not many Days Sail from the Line, when ſuch a Gale aroſe at South-Eaſt, as drove us ſeveral Days from our Courſe; till at length, heightning to a Storm, the whole Crew were in the utmoſt Conſternation; inſomuch, that by its Increaſe, and Continuance, the Captain himſelf had given the Ship over for loſt.

We had ſuffered extremely in our Sails, and Rigging, and our Maſts were all more or leſs damaged; even ſo far, as to be almoſt uſeleſs, as to the Guidance of the Ship; but what terrified the Crew moſt apparently, was ſome Injury ſhe had taken in her Hold, wherein the Water was riſen upward of four Feet, in twelve Hours.

The diſmal Proſpect of our Affairs, kept every Hand upon Duty; nor were the Captain, or my Guardians, a whit leſs active than the reſt; for theſe latter, were ſubject to ſuch unſpeakable Horrors, that they wrought at the Pumps Night and Day, far more like Slaves than Paſſengers, the Tears all the while trickling down their Cheeks, and they themſelves groaning, and lamenting their Fate moſt miſerably.

Wills having quitted his Poſt, for the Recruit of his Breath and Strength, only till he ſhould be enabled again to reſume it, and obſerving me to ſtand idle, and unconcernedly leaning againſt the Front of the Quarter-deck, with my Arm in a Loophole there,

to

to keep by Body ſteady (for the Ship work'd ſo that I could not otherwiſe have kept my Feet) attacked me in a furious Paſſion, for appearing ſo indolent, in a Time of ſuch imminent Danger.

WHAT is the Matter with you, *Wills*, ſaid I, what are you afraid of drowning? as for my own Concern, this is the moſt pleaſurable Part of the Voyage to me; nay, my Joy encreaſes, with what you idly call Danger. —— Prithee Man! cry not, nor wring your Hands thus. I took you for a Man of Spirit; ——but can calmly laugh, and make a Scoff of your Inquietude now.

WHAT the Devil ſtand you lounging away your Time here for! ſaid *Wills*, can't you yet underſtand that all our Efforts are too weak to keep her above Water. Can't you perceive yourſelf within a Thought of periſhing? Behave like a Man, our Lives demand your Strength; clap an Hand to the Pump, or we muſt all be at the Bottom by Morning. It wanted then about an Hour to Day-light.

POOR *Wills!* replied I, What can ſuch Courage as yours dread? you, who are Hero enough to oppreſs a naked Man, and drag him from his Country, his Family, his Friends?——Let us ſink; what have I to do with that? —— Am I now in my own Way, purſuing my own Inclinations? or, can I be leſs ſo at the Bottom of the Ocean, than upon theſe Waters? —— If you would but reflect a little, we ſhould ſoon be agreed, that you have no more Buſineſs above Water than I have; then why ſhould we boggle at ſinking

ſinking together, rather than ſwimming? Your own Choice led you and *Johns* hither, to guard me, and will you not, think you, have faithfully diſcharged your Truſt, in purſuing me to the Bottom?——Comfort yourſelf with that Reflection,———If you are in a good Cauſe, that will chear you, never fear.

TELL me of no Cauſes, good or bad, ſaid he; no Hand ought to be uſeleſs in the Diſtreſs we are all in; are not all our Beings at Stake?

I AM aſhamed of thy Affliction, *Wills*, ſaid I; for it plainly indicates to me, that you are a rank Coward, a mean-ſpirited Villain, in your Heart; one that can with Greedineſs oppreſs, but ſuffer no Oppreſſion.—Why *Wills*, added I, Death is no more to me than Sleep.----I tell thee, Conſcience charges me with no baſe Crimes to be repented of;—— I have injured no Man, diſtreſſed no Man, nor hath my Hand ever felt the Weight of a Bribe, to blind my Compaſſion, or ſet me at Defiance with all that is good and ſociable.--- I meditate no Man's Ruin; nor meanly condeſcend to barter my Conſcience for Food or Raiment.

WHAT Benefit do you and *Johns* think to reap in the Mud of the Sea, for this glorious Enterprize?—Will your Treachery advance in *Pluto*'s or *Neptune*'s Courts, think you?—Will your ill-gotten Gains purchaſe you a Return from thence?—Poor heartleſs Man! can a drowning diſcourage you, whoſe Valour hath for the whole Voyage been exerciſed in ſubduing a ſingle Fellow-Traveller, and adding daily to his Miſery.

LORD

LORD have Mercy upon me! ſaid *Wills*.

FOR ſhame, *Wills*, ſaid I; proſtitute not that tremendous Name to thy own baſe Purpoſes.—What? ſhalt thou crave Mercy, who wouldſt ſhew none?---Have not I intreated for your Mercy to me? firſt to ſet me on Shore in *England*; then to allay my Drought; then to land me any where; and laſtly, but to inform me to what Shore you would convey me.——Have you complied with any of theſe Requeſts? they would have proved Acts of Mercy to me;—— but were they granted? No;——then, ſurely, you preferred Rigour to Mercy, or you would have had Compaſſion on me; and ſhall not that, inſtead of this, be deemed the beſt for you?——It muſt, from your own Principles.——Or is the Caſe inverted now ſelf is concerned in it?

Wills, added I, I have ſomewhere read, that he who will ſhew no Mercy, ſhall have Judgment without Mercy—Think on this, *Wills*, and ſurely, as you ſailed hither under Pay, and are now in your elected Employment, you ſhould unrepiningly accept your Reward; whereas, only from Invertion of Circumſtances, what you eſteem as the worſt of Curſes, muſt be regarded as a Bleſſing to me.

I AS verily believe the Ship's ſinking to be as unavoidable as you can; but my Sufferings under you will improve that into a Bleſſing to me, which you ſhrink from as a Misfortune.---I will not ſay you ſhall never reach your Port, as you told me, *Wills*; but if Providence may in any Caſe be arraigned for Un-

Unconcern in the Affairs of Men, ſurely that of your ſafe Arrival muſt be it.

It ſhould ſeem to me, *Wills*, added I, full late for ſecreting your vile Purpoſes from me, or indeed, for my preſſing for the Knowledge of them, when we are both ſo near to the Verge of that Country where every the moſt clandeſtine Fact will be expoſed; yet, prithee, what meant you by my never reaching your Port with you! for that hath given me no ſlight Uneaſineſs.

The Wind then raiſing and throwing us, in ſuch dreadful wiſe, that we could only ſupport ourſelves whilſt clinging to Parts of the Ship; and the Timber giving ſuch ſudden Cracks and Jerks, as if ſhe was every Moment ſplitting to Pieces; *Wills*, ſinking on his Knees, in a moſt moving and penitential Manner, begged my Foegiveneſs for all the Injury he had done me; confeſſing, that his Crimes had but too juſtly merited his approaching Fate; and added, that in Order ſtill to have increaſed their Gains, *Johns* and he had concerted the Sale of me, at the firſt proper Market they ſhould have arrived at; believing that no News would be more acceptable to my Father, than that of my Death, conſidering how bitterly he had inveighed againſt me; ſo that their Intent was, he ſaid, upon their Return, to inform my Father, that I had died on the Voyage.

Wills ſmote his Breaſt, and wept prodigiouſly; but had ſcarce concluded his Story, when with a ſtupendous Craſh, as we ſunk from the Height of a Wave, the Veſſel ſplit aſunder, hanging but by a Plank or two on

the

the Outſide, which the next Wave broke off; and with the Forepart of the Ship, ſunk every Soul on board her but myſelf, who was ſtill preſerved above Water, meerly by my Arm hanging, as I ſaid before, in the Loophole.

I HAD ſome Time for Thought, it is true; but expected no leſs every Moment than to have followed the reſt of the Crew;— tho' I reſolved not to let go my Hold, let what would happen; when, providentially, the Stern ſinking firſt, raiſed the Part I ſtood at above Water, horizontally; and the Wind ſoon after lowering, I mounted aſtride, upon the broken Edge of the Upper-deck, and in that Condition, was driven about at the Mercy of the Waves for upwards of two Days. On the third Morning, at Peep of Day, to my inexpreſſible Joy, I beheld a Veſſel bearing down upon me; to which, making the beſt Signals in my Power, ſhe ſent her Boat, and took me on board her.

IT happened to be a Veſſel from *Waterford*, Captain *Maggee*, Commander, who had ſuffered ſo immoderately in the late Storm, that had it not been for the Abatement of the Wind, I might almoſt as well have been on board my Wreck ſtill; however, we made hard ſhift to get her into Cape *Vincent*, one of the *Cape de Verd* Iſlands, where, under great Difficulty, and the Loſs of ſeveral Months Employment, we fitted her for our Paſſage to this Kingdom; the Maſter and Crew having firſt ſat in Judgment upon her, and condemned her as incapable of ſuſtaining a Voyage to the Bay of *Bengall*, whitherto ſhe was originally bound.

Our Port, as I ſaid before, was *Waterford*; but being in our Return driven by Streſs of Weather, along the Coaſt of *England*, and the Veſſel not able to bear up againſt a rough Sea, we gained an Opportunity of running her into *Dublin* Bay, where I landed; but had no manner of Apprehenſion of my dear *Biddy*'s tarrying here ſo long without me, in caſe you had, in Compliance with my Letter, croſſed the Sea to this Kingdom at all; but, however, as I was ſo near to the Place I had directed you to, I could not quit the Kingdom without an Inquiry.

I must needs ſay, Captain *Maggee* is a moſt gentlemanlike and humane Man; for informing him of my Name, Family, and Adventures, tho' I offered him my Purſe, in which was more than I believe he would have demanded for my Paſſage, he told me, that at ſo great a Diſtance as I was from Home, I muſt neceſſarily want Money before I arrived there; therefore, he often making the Trip of *London*, would wait upon me there, which he preſumed might be a more convenient Place for me to pay him at, than in a ſtrange Country.

Thus, Ladies, ſaid my dear Lord, have I brought myſelf on Shore again, where I landed but the third Day from this; but how providentially, to clear up your Innocence, my Dear, I hope ever to abound with too much Gratitude to forget; neither doubt I but before I leave *Dublin*, to recriminate upon the Authors of our Diſtreſſes.

His Lordſhip having concluded, Mrs. *Newburgh* was ſo captivated with his Lordſhip's Manner of relating it, that ſhe even laviſhed

out

out her Encomiums to Bankruptcy; nor had ſhe Store of Compliments left to ſupply the then Exigency of her Inclination; but with her Breath, having nearly exhauſted her Spirits too, we took our Leaves of her for that Night, and retreated to our own Apartment.

His Lordſhip wrote by the firſt Pacquet for Remittances, which in due Time arrived; and alſo to the School-maſter, where his Children were lodged, commanding him at his Peril, not to part with them even to his Patron himſelf, upon any Pretence whatſoever; for that he would require them at his Hands.

So far as was conſiſtent with the Deference I always paid to his Lordſhip's Opinion, I was againſt this Method of Proceeding, leſt the School-maſter informing his Father of it, he ſhould recal them from him; which in my Comprehenſion he could not withſtand; and in that Caſe, his Father might otherwiſe ſo diſpoſe of them, that we might never find them again; or at leaſt, not without infinite Difficulty; but his Lordſhip convinced me of my Miſtake: For can you imagine, my dear *Biddy*, ſaid he, that *Stringer*, when he recovers himſelf again, will not acquaint my Father of the Information he has given us, and of his Diſappointment by my Means? And that he will not ſtill ſeek my Father's further Countenance, by contriving other Miſchiefs againſt us? And then, my Father may aim at withdrawing them; but when the Maſter ſhall have received my poſitive Commands to the contrary, he will be cautious how he acts over officiouſly, for his own Sake, leaſt himſelf ſhould feel the Weight of my Reſentment.

When we had thus ſettled theſe Affairs, his Lordſhip employed a Sollicitor, and a Counſellor, againſt the Criminals; and as he was adviſed, proceeded againſt them firſt, as joint Accomplices for a Conſpiracy againſt me; on which Action, he recovered four thouſand Pounds Damages. Then he proſecuted them, and convicted them all upon the Perjury; whereupon they were ſentenced to a ſmall Fine, to ſtand on the Pillory, and Impriſonment for three Years; but as his Lordſhip had no View of ever obtaining any Part of the pecuniary Damages, he only made uſe of that Judgment, to their ſeveral Detentions in Priſon, after the Expiration of the three Years, being deſirous, that they might never be turned looſe to further Miſchief.

CHAP. XX.

Mrs. Thomas *declares* Biddy's *Parentage to her. Lady* Betty *had promiſed great Things for* Biddy. *Mrs.* Thomas *ſuſpects them left in* Corbet's *Hand.*

Notwithstanding my own Acquittal, the Return of my dear Lord, and that every thing between us proceeded according to my own Wiſh; yet the few Words Mr. *Thomas* had dropt at my Trial, of my not knowing who was my Mother, and that I was the Daughter of a great Lady deceaſed; theſe Things, I ſay, long rankled in my Mind, to the no little Moleſtation of it.

Now though I had ſeen Mrs. *Thomas* many Times ſince, and had as often propoſed to have demanded her Explanation upon that myſte-

myſterious Sentence; yet, the Fear of his Lordſhip's Diſpleaſure, tho' my Mother ſhould prove to have been of ever ſo exalted a Rank, if I could not produce a Father too, had ever deterred me, from putting the Queſtion to Mrs. *Thomas*.

I GREW ſo uneaſy at length, that I took the Opportunity one Night of mentioning to Lord *G--r--d*, what Mr. *Thomas* had hinted at my Trial, and intreated his Lordſhip to ſpeak freely, whether he ſhould be offended at my interrogating Mrs. *Thomas* very narrowly about it, for that if his Lordſhip ſhould rather chuſe ſtill to be ignorant of it himſelf, it would not be prudent in him to ſuffer me to mention it to her, ſince it would be impoſſible for me to conceal any Information ſhe might give me, from his Lordſhip.

MY deareſt *Biddy*, ſaid he, as nothing ariſing from without your own Perſon, can poſſibly either augment or extenuate my Regard for you, make no Scruple to gain all the Intelligence you ſeem ſo anxious for, or of communicating the ſame to me: For who, or whatever your Mother was, how can that affect your Truth, Virtue, Faith, or any of the Excellencies my Eye beholds only in you? It is thy individual Self, compounded of all thy preſent Qualifications, that I prize, not thy Mother, or thy Father, let them have been who they will; and if Mrs *Thomas* can ſtrike out any Lights to direct you in the Search, I ſhall take the greateſt Pleaſure in being preſent at her Report of them.

YOUR Lordſhip is ſo ever the ſame, replied I, that I muſt omit thoſe Compliments

of Gratitude, which in a Caſe of like Nature, might be requiſite to another Perſon; nay, was I particularly to expreſs my Thanks for every of your Lordſhip's Benevolences to me, my whole Life muſt prove a Repetition of the ſame Thing, without Variation. With your Lordſhip's Leave therefore, added I, Mrs. *Thomas* ſhall dine with us To-morrow: For I muſt own, that ſince it will not offend your Lordſhip, my Curioſity is ſtretched to the higheſt Pitch, for a Diſcloſure of this Myſtery.

So ſoon after Dinner as the Cloth was removed, and we were alone, I began with my Obligations to Mr. *Thomas*, whoſe Zeal at my Trial, had firſt given a Check to the Rapidity of that Torrent, which had ſo nearly over-born me, by protracting the Verdict againſt me, till her own, and my dear Lord's Arrival; but ſaid I, Mrs. *Thomas*, there were ſome Words dropt by your Huſband on that Occaſion, which have ever ſince occupied no inconſiderable Share of my Reflections.

She deſired to know what they were, for that in her Hearing, no more than common had paſſed. I replied, that he had informed the Court of my being the Daugther of as fine a Lady deceaſed, as any then living. Did he thereby only mean to beſpeak the Favour of the Court for me? ſaid I, or what elſe could he intend by it? Pray ſcruple not to declare yourſelf freely before his Lordſhip, who is now purpoſely preſent, to partake of ſuch Myſtery, if any there is, as may be couched under thoſe Words of his.

Mrs. *Thomas*, by her reddening very much, plainly diſcovered that her Huſband's Speech had not been wholly inſignificant.

She

She assured us, that the unriddling that Affair, would afford her no little Pain, for the Character of a Lady, once her generous Friend, and for whose Memory she bore the highest Veneration; but as we both desired it of her, if we would engage never to make use of our Knowledge to the Discredit of the Deceased, she would reveal that Secret to us, which she had thought solely to have confined to her own Breast: For that tho' she had informed her Husband of my Descent from a noble Lady, she had never pointed out whom, to him.

WE passed our Words, for Maintenance of the Privacy, unless in Case of any considerable Advantage to accrue to ourselves thereby, and then, not without her previous Consent; for we urged, that would any Prejudice arise thereby to the Memory of the Deceased, it must in the long run, rebound upon ourselves: So that at all Events, for our own Sakes, it would behove us to be careful of the deceased Honour, our own being so intimately connected to it.

MRS. *Thomas* then applying herself to me, my dear Lady, said she, for I must no more stile you Daughter, you well know, that you received your Education under me, and as my Child; though my Circumstances in Life, would not have intitled you to the many Embellishments you obtained, at the Expence of your Godmother, as you ever thought her, but in Truth, your own Parent.

HIS Lordship and I watching each other's Eyes and Countenances, from thence collected, the Surprize we had severally imbibed from

from thoſe Words; a ſort of ſecret Pleaſure, mixed with a Diffidence and Confuſion, diffuſing itſelf thro' our whole Perſons. However, we ſat both ſilent, whilſt Mrs. *Thomas* proceeded.

I WAS introduced very early in Life, into the Retinue of Lady *Betty G—s*, late Counteſs of *B———n*, whom I faithfully ſerved, for upwards of fourteen Years; during which Time, his Grace the Duke of *R—g—h*, very much frequented our Family, till the Death of my old Lord, Lady *Betty*'s Father. His Grace had a Wife, it is true, but her defective Intellects, had neceſſarily occaſioned her Confinement.

HIS Grace was greatly enamoured of my Lady, nor was ſhe a leſs Admirer of him. At my Lord's Death, his vaſt Fortune and Eſtate devolved wholly upon my Lady; when ſhe was almoſt diſtracted, that ſhe could not make the Duke happy in it, and her Perſon; nor was the Duke leſs anxious than herſelf: For many of the ableſt Heads in the Kingdom were conſulted, for procuring a Divorce from the Dutcheſs, ſhe being, as to every Purpoſe of the Marriage State, incapable of ſupporting the Place of a Wife; that his Grace might intermarry with my Lady; but none of their Endeavours could meet with the leaſt Encouragement.

IN ſhort, the Love they bore to each other, heightened by uninterrupted Intercourſe, prevailed for their Submiſſion to each others Embraces; and, dear Madam, added ſhe, you are the Produce of their ſtolen Enjoyments.

MY

MY Lady no ſooner perceived her Condition, than terrified to Death at the Conſequences; *Mary*, ſaid ſhe, to me, have not you a Lover, one *Giles Farmer?* (one of her Ladyſhip's Chairmen) I could not deny, but that he had often expreſſed himſelf to me in that Strain, I told her; then added ſhe, I would have you marry him. *Giles* is a ſober Man, and will make you a good Huſband; and that you may ſucceed together, I will ſtill retain him in my Service, and leſt you ſhould not be gaining ſomewhat as well as he, I intend to give you an hundred Pounds, to ſet you up in ſome little Way, to maintain yourſelf.

I COULD do no leſs than acknowledge her Ladyſhip's Benignity to us, and the very next Time that *Giles* applied to me on the Subject, I laid forth my Lady's Favour to us, which no ways retarded the Progreſs of our Match, in leſs than a Fortnight we were married.

I EXPECTED now to have fallen into the Way of Life my Lady had promiſed, to ſupport myſelf by; but ſhe told me, ſhe would not have me leave her Service, till Pregnancy ſhould render my Duty inconſiſtent. From almoſt the Inſtant of my Marriage, ſhe received me more and more into her Confidence, and at length, revealed to me her Affair with the Duke; injoining me the ſtricteſt Secrecy: and that in Caſe I ſhould not prove with Child ſoon, ſhe begg'd me to give out that I was ſo: For that if poſſible, ſhe intended me, not only for the Nurſe, but the Mother of the Infant ſhe then went with.

WHEN

WHEN I had conſidered the Intimacy there had ever been between the Duke and my Lady I was not ſo much ſurprized at what I had heard, as otherwiſe I might have been; but from that Day, we were conſtantly projecting Means for her private Delivery, and the Diſpoſal of the Infant; till her Time drawing near, a Pretence of Illneſs, gave Riſe for a Tour to *France*, for Change of Air, and to a Stay of Six Months there; when, who ſhould be appointed to attend her thither but myſelf.

HER Ladyſhip left all her *Engliſh* Servants behind but me, taking only a new *French* Footman with her; but it being towards Winter, and we travelling to the Southern Parts of *France*; after my Lady had taken Occaſion to diſmiſs her *French* Man at *Bourges*, no one, from thenceforth, knowing any Thing of us, or from whence we came; ſhe took a private Lodging at *Labaour* to lie-in at; and after your Birth, Madam, her Ladyſhip knowing when my Time would be up, ſtayed there till I was delivered alſo: but my Child dying in the Month, I had then a ſpecial Opportunity of receiving you as my own.

We made it full eight Months before we returned, when I took you home with me; neither did my honeſt Huſband *Farmer*, ever to his dying Day, know otherwiſe, than that you was his own Child, and believed Lady *Betty* to have been only her Godmother.

WE were ſcarce well landed in *England*, when News of the Duke's Death reached us; which coming ſo on a ſudden upon my Lady, ſunk

ſunk her under ſuch Affliction, that for ſeveral Months, I but little expected ſhe would have ſurvived him: For Love more extravagant, never ſubſiſted, than theirs; being heightened, by the Impracticability of legal Enjoyment, which had undoubtedly proved the Caſe, but for the interpoſing Life of the Dutcheſs.

HER Ladyſhip would ſee no Company, for near upon eighteen Months after her Return to *England*; excuſing herſelf through Indiſpoſition, that ſhe might the better indulge her Melancholy; neither took ſhe the leaſt Delight in any Thing, ſave yourſelf, with whom ſhe ordered me daily to attend her; when ſtealing you to her Arms, in my Preſence only, ſhe would laviſh out her Sighs into your tender Boſom, call upon his Grace, and point out to me in you, each Lineament of his Face; then in Tranſports, would ſo cloſely preſs you, that I have more than once ſuſpected, her Eagerneſs would have deſtroyed you.

As you grew up to more Maturity, from a Dread of the Secret's Diſcovery, ſhe became more cautious in her Expreſſions of Tenderneſs to you, leſt you ſhould form a Diſtinction, between the Embraces of a Friend, and a Parent. She therefore moſt generouſly ſatisfied me for your Keeping and Education, but all under her Direction; which Coſt beſtowed thereon, was always aſcribed by me, to the Generoſity of your Godmother, which Title, my good Lady diſdained not publickly to acknowledge.

AFTER

AFTER her Ladyſhip had married the Earl of *B——n*, ſhe then, you know, took you home to her, as a Companion to her eldeſt Daughter; though I muſt ſubmit to you, Madam, added ſhe, now you really know who you are, whether upon cool Recollection of paſt Circumſtances, my good Lady behaved to you there, moſt like a Miſtreſs or a Parent.

I TOLD Mrs. *Thomas*, that from her firſt Hints of my being her Ladyſhip's Daughter, ſo many Occurrencies had darted into my Mind, more demonſtrative of the Mother, than barely the Miſtreſs, that was I to have traced back every Occaſion ſhe had given me, of conſidering myſelf in the Light of a Daughter, it would ſeem incredible, that I had never formed ſuch a Notion before; but ſuppoſing it all to have flowed from her Ladyſhip's private Benevolence, I had heretofore overlook'd it.

O! ſaid Mrs. *Thomas*, how have I ſeen her view you with every Fondneſs that Deſire could frame, while you attended as her Servant only; ſcanning each Geſture, Turn and Movement of you; till ſinking into the Reverie of paſt pleaſing Scenes, the Tears have bubbled in her Eyes, and with a Sigh, ſhe has been obliged to leave you.

I HAVE often made bold to tell her, that I hoped, tho' you was placed but in an inferior Station in her Family, the Earl's Children would never cauſe her to forget you, for that you was her own, equally with them, and at her Death muſt be far more helpleſs,

as

as you would then have no Friend to depend upon.

HER conſtant replies upon ſuch Occaſions were, that as no Man could be ſo dear to her as your Father was, whoſe Memory would ever ſurvive in her Breaſt; ſo no Child by any other, could efface that Tenderneſs, ſhe muſt neceſſarily bear to his Repreſentative; (meaning your Ladyſhip) for you being ſo fine a Lady, of ſo engaging a Diſpoſition, not only to herſelf, but every one in general, ſhe had taken Care, previous to her Marriage, to reſerve to herſelf ſuch Power over her own, as ſhould you continue to deſerve it at her Hands, would make you happy, in the Arms of whomſoever you ſhould beſtow yourſelf upon: Neither would ſhe leave it in the Power of the firſt Peer of *England* to deſpiſe an Alliance with you, if he admired your Perſon. I never heard her ſay what ſhe would do for you; but ſhe has declared, when you was ſcarce marriageable, that could ſhe find a young Gentleman worthy of you, ſhe would give you Ten Thouſand Pounds down.

MRS. *Thomas* having now compleated her Narrative, his Lordſhip and I both complimented her, upon her Delivery of it, aſſuring her of the Obligation ſhe had loaded us with; and after ſome Conference had upon the Occaſion, I aſked his Lordſhip, whether he could conceive any way, whereby her Ladyſhip could have ſecured me any Thing, eſpecially after ſhe married? He ſoon convinced me, there were Methods of ſo doing, both before, and alſo after her Marriage, and he the rather believed Mrs. *Thomas*'s Report,

for that his Father had hinted a Reſervation, her Ladyſhip had made to herſelf before Marriage; but had at the ſame Time added, that he had had the Management to prevent her making any Diſpoſition, in purſuance of it; neither did he ever hear ſhe had made a Will, but ſhould ſhe, added he, have made any Settlement upon you, it may prove an endleſs Enquiry, in whoſe Hands it may be depoſited, without the leaſt Trace to purſue it by.

His Lordſhip then demanding of Mrs. *Thomas*, whether her Miſtreſs had not ſome particular Confident, with whom ſhe might probably have intruſted ſuch a Thing, as in her Marriage-State, might not be ſo proper to be left in the Power of an Huſband at her Deceaſe, ſhe pauſed a while, and then replied, there was one Mr. *Corbet*, who had formerly been a Steward to her Father, whoſe Judgment ſhe greatly valued, and by which ſhe chiefly regulated all her Money-concerns, and Eſtate; that he was not only an intelligent, but a moſt worthy Man, and ſome Years before lived upon his Eſtate in *Lincolnſhire*; adding that he uſed conſtantly to pay his Duty every Year to her Ladyſhip, when he came to Town to ſell Cattle; and that her Lady, long before his Arrival, would be wiſhing for it, and always uneaſy at his Return; but whether he was then living or not, ſhe could not ſay, having ſeen nothing of him for many Years.

His Lordſhip and I were both of Opinion, that no one would more probably be entruſted by her Ladyſhip, than this Mr. *Corbet*;

Corbet; and reſolved to find him out, at our Return to *England*.

As we had gained all manner of Satisfaction from my Inquiry, I made uſe of the firſt Opportunity, of hoping what his Lordſhip had heard, would no ways leſſen his Eſteem for me; when he entirely diſcharged my Mind of every remaining Scruple, on that Head, by the paſſionate Declaration he made me, which ſet my Heart at perfect Eaſe again.

CHAP. XXI.

Lord G---r---d *beſtows Recompences on* Biddy's *Friends. To the Goaler. Interview of his Lordſhip and* Stringer. *Preſents Mrs* Newburgh's *Brother. His Book-keeper. To* Thomas *and his Wife. Letter from Lord* G---r---d *to his Father. Anſwered by* Powell, *his Steward. Conjectures thereon.*

HAVING received our Remittances from *England*, his Lordſhip began to conſider in what Manner he ſhould beſt return the Civilities due to ſuch as had any Ways been contributary to my Safety, or Convenience, ſince I had been in *Dublin*; and having heard me propoſe a Viſit to the Goaler and his Wife, in acknowledgment of their Indulgence to me whilſt under their Care, he deſired that he might join in the Confeſſion; for that it being equally his Concern as my own, he could not think he had performed his Duty, unleſs

leſs he teſtified it by his own Lips; ſo that taking our Rout together, we expreſſed our Gratitude for his Favour; and as I had before informed his Lordſhip of my Intention, I preſented his Wife with ten Broad-pieces, Mrs. *Newburgh* having before diſcharged every regular Demand they had upon me; but his Lordſhip, not content with that, (tho' the People conceived themſelves amply rewarded by my Liberality to the Wife) but having expatiated for ſome Time upon the Repreſentation I had made to him of their Humanity, and that the Excellency of ſuch Endowments might not ſeem meanly eſteemed by him, preſented the Keeper himſelf with a Purſe, which he had purpoſely repleniſhed with twenty Pounds; tho' he had not beforehand let me into his Deſign, aſſuring the Keeper, at the ſame Time, of every friendly Office in his Power for the Time to come.

The Rumour of his Lordſhip's Viſit to the Goaler, ſoon reached the Ears of *Stringer*; who ſending for his Keeper, begged his Interceſſion with his Lordſhip for Leave to caſt himſelf at his Feet, that he might, in ſuch Manner as he was beſt able, diſcharge his Duty, by an ample Confeſſion of his Crime; and making ſuch further Attonement as was then in his Power.

My dear Lord, who no leſs for my Sake than his own, had every thing to fear from *Stringer*, conceived ſuch a Dread at the very Name of the Man, when he reflected upon his paſt Enormities, that he at firſt declined all Intercourſe with him, alledging, that he who had not only violated the Ties of Amity, but

had

had run ſuch unheard of Lengths to diſtreſs a Benefactor, for the Sake of a ſordid Subſiſtence, would not even yet heſitate at the Perpetration of ſome violent Act, againſt one or both of us, ſhould we fall within the Extent of his Capacity for Miſchief: But the poor Man, the Goaler, ſo ſolemnly petitioning for the Favour, and offering to be reſponſible for his quiet Demeanor, his Lordſhip did at Length conſent to his Admiſſion to our Preſence.

THE Wretchedneſs of *Stringer*'s Appearance, and the viſible Compunction of his Mind, had ſo forcible an Effect upon his Lordſhip's Paſſions, when he reflected in what a different View he had heretofore beheld him, that the Tears involuntarily fell from his Cheeks, nor could he form ſufficient Reſolution for preventing them; but when his Lordſhip had ſhaken off the Gloom that ſat upon his Spirits, and had began to recapitulate paſt Tranſactions, and from thence to infer the Improbability there ſeemed to have been of *Stringer*'s ever appearing as his Enemy, and that in ſo tender a Point too, his Agonies became excruciating, and his Deſpair vented itſelf in ſuch Execrations, that he vowed he even pined after Hell itſelf, as an Alleviation of his preſent Torments.

HIS Lordſhip would have recommended to him an early and ſteady Perſeverance in Repentance, formed ſolely from Reflections on his paſt Conduct, excluſive of the Dread of Puniſhment, as the moſt balſamic Lenitive to his Torments; but *Stringer*, under the bitterеſt Anguiſh, replied, that it was too late; the Gate of Mercy was barred againſt him; nor

could the Devil himſelf prove a more cruel Tyrant to him than his own Conſcience, and his reſtleſs Companions, who, by his Wiles, he had drawn into a Participation of his Crimes and Sufferings: For that their momentary Curſes and Reproaches, were bitterer to his Soul than the moſt conceivable Torments. All therefore that he further requeſted in Life was, his Lordſhip's Forgiveneſs, and then by Death to be releaſed from his wordly Woe; in Compariſon of which, the worſt that could befall him hereafter, muſt prove inſignificant.

NEITHER his Lordſhip or myſelf, being longer able to endure this Scene, we were about to have taken our Leaves; when *Stringer*, intreated his Lordſhip's Charity to him. How! *Stringer*, ſaid his Lordſhip, do you ſerve a Maſter who grudges you Wages?

MY Lord, replied he, I have merited Neglect from all the World, and am now moſt ſenſible of it from that Hand to whom I ſtand indebted for all my Miſeries. Scarce a Poſt hath departed ſince your Lordſhip's Landing, but I have wrote to my Deſtroyer, even but for the common Neceſſaries of Life, to ſuſtain Nature; but have obtained no Anſwer ſince the ill Succeſs of our Attempt, nor for ſome Time before; but this I imputed to my not being able to tranſmit the Account he expected ſo ſoon as he hoped for it; but why I have not been ſupplied, ſince he knows what Sufferers we are by this Lady's Trial, I cannot imagine; yet true it is, no more Notice hath been taken of our Relief, than if, inſtead of perſecuting you for his Sake,

I had

I had turned the whole Force of my Machinations againſt your Father himſelf.

O, that my Time could but be paſſed again! O, that I had but once caſt forwards my Reflections beyond the Inſtant-Moment, not all his Wealth or Titles ſhould have biaſſed me to the Breach of Friendſhip, Generoſity, Honour, Conſcience, and Juſtice, that I have been guilty of! But Reflection comes too late! Woe! Woe! alas! eternal Woe, muſt be the Remuneration of my Perfidy.

WE were ſo ſhocked at *Stringer*'s Wretchedneſs, and his Lordſhip's Compaſſion was ſo lively, that commiſerating even a profeſſed Enemy, he gave the Keeper ten Pieces of Gold, to be diſpoſed of for *Stringer*'s Uſe, as he ſhould think moſt conducive to his Benefit; and then we left him: But ſo plunged were we in Melancholy, that we could not entirely ſhake it off for ſome Days afterwards.

WE were now thinking upon our Return to *England*, when revolving in our Minds what further we had to diſcharge or beſtow, before we left *Dublin*, we both waited upon Mrs. *Newburgh*'s Brother, with the Tender of our ſolemneſt Acknowledgments, for his favourable Interpoſition in eaſing of my Reſtraint; and as his Lordſhip had before found out his favourite Paſſion to be Horſemanſhip, he purchaſed, and preſented him with the moſt beautiful Creature of that Species to be found in *Dublin*, at a very extraordinary Price, and rewarded his Book-keeper's Trouble with five Broad-pieces.

NOTHING now remaining, that we recollected, but Mrs. *Newburgh*, after amply compenſating

penſating her for the utmoſt Demand ſhe could make upon him, his Lordſhip, as a Gratuity for her generous Concern for me, preſented her with two hundred Broad-Pieces.

We had now contracted for our Paſſage, and had fixed the Time of our Departure, when a moſt neceſſary Piece of Beneficence occurring to me, I forthwith acquainted his Lordſhip of it; and that was ſome Recompence to Mr. *Thomas* and his Wife; of the Importance of which his Lordſhip was ſo ſenſible, that under ſome Emotion, he proteſted, that ſhould he have left *Ireland* without intereſting himſelf on a Subject, wherein he looked upon his Honour to be ſo minutely concern'd, he could never have forgiven himſelf. He deſired, therefore, that I would ſend for, and conſult them upon their Circumſtances, and learn from them in what Way he could be moſt ſerviceable to them.

They freely expoſed their Hearts to me at my Requeſt, aſſuring me they left not *England* for Advantage, but with a very ill Will, having lived much better, and more ſatisfactorily there, than ever they ſhould in *Dublin*; but that *Thomas* owing about fourſcore Pounds to his Timber-merchant, whoſe Widow and Executrix preſſed him extremely hard for the Money; leſt he ſhould have been laid in a Goal, before he could have collected it together, they were forced to fly; and, that ſaving that one Demand, he was not indebted twenty Pounds in the World.

I Desired Mrs. *Thomas* to call upon me again the next Day, againſt which Time, I would certainly have conſidered of ſomewhat for

for advancing their Affairs. I informed his Lordſhip how Affairs ſtood with them, and adviſed with him what to do for them. *Biddy*, ſaid he, I am ſatisfied, tho' Mrs. *Thomas* appears not now as your Mother, yet you are not wanting of an inbred Affection for the Woman; neither is her Huſband's voluntary Eſpouſal of your Intereſt, by any Means careleſsly to be neglected.

YOU tell me they both prefer *England* to this Country, and that the ſmall Sum you have limited will reinſtate them there.---They have ſet our Hearts at reſt, then why ſhould not we in our Turns, as cheerfully advance their Felicity, and that in their own Way too? What think you of this?

I REPLIED, that undoubtedly, Mrs. *Thomas* would ever be dear to me, from the engaging Treatment I had received from her in my Youth; rather exceeding that of moſt Mothers to their own Children. Principles of Love, I told him, ſown in our younger Years, uſually ſhoot into the moſt luxuriant branches; but as to what his Lordſhip had concluded with, I begged his own Explanation. My dear, replied he, I would take them over to *England*, pay their Debts, and eſtabliſh them in a thriving Way there.

ACCORDING to my Appointment, Mrs. *Thomas* returned the next Day for my Anſwer; when extolling his Lordſhip's Nobleneſs of Mind, and expatiating upon my own peculiar Happineſs with him, for that the Gratification of my Deſires was his ſole Aim: I added, that his Lordſhip, upon my Repreſentation of their Circumſtances, and their pi-

ning

ning after *Old England*, had determined to convey them thither, and to diſcharge the Concern which had enforced their Exile from thence by the Payment of their Debts; and that himſelf would take Care for their future Eſtabliſhment.

I DID indeed expect no leſs than ſome pathetic Prayer for Bleſſings upon his Lordſhip, for his Good-will to them; but my Words had ſunk deeper into Mrs. *Thomas*'s Breaſt than I could well have imagined; for fixing her Eyes ſtedfaſtly upon me, and changing Countenance, ſhe was juſt dropping from her Chair, had I not inſtantly ſupported her; but rubbing the Palms of her Hands, and miniſtring a little Wine to her, which then ſtood by us upon the Table, ſhe ſoon recovered Strength enough for thanking me; profeſſing that the Tidings I had conveyed to her Senſes, were far more grateful to her, than the making her Queen of *Ireland* would have been; for but for her Huſband's Suffering there, ſhe could by Choice have begged her Bread in *England*, rather than have inherited the beſt Eſtate in this Country.

WILL you give me Leave, dear Lady, added ſhe, to bear away this joyful News to my Huſband? I replied, it was for that very Purpoſe I had informed her of it, then without ſaying any more, ſhe withdrew, that ſhe might not for one unneceſſary Moment, defer the Satisfaction of conveying the Tidings of their happy Fortune to a Huſband ſhe ſo juſtly eſteemed.

HIS Lordſhip, on the Report of my Proceedings, was no leſs delighted at his Capacity for

for beſtowing a Bleſſing upon thoſe poor People, than themſelves were at the Proſpect of receiving it; and he himſelf having the next Day ratified it to them, we all haſtened our Preparations for embarking, and in about ten Days more ſet ſail.

HIS Lordſhip, who notwithſtanding the Earl's cruel Treatment of us both, could not yet diveſt himſelf of all filial Allegiance to his Father, ſoon after Mrs. *Thomas*'s Publication of my Parentage, had wrote him a Letter from *Dublin*; of which having preſerved the Draught, I ſhall here preſent it to my Reader in his own Words.

Honoured Sir,

THE benign Hand of Providence, having guided me thro' the Perils of the Deep, preſerved me from the helliſh Devices of my more dangerous Companions (both of them long ſince periſhed in the Abyſs, my Eyes beholding not only their previous Horrors, but that dreadful Cataſtrophe) and at Length ſafely landed your unfortunate Son on the *Iriſh* Shore, juſt at the Inſtant calculated for the Preſervation of a Wife, daily rendered more precious to me, by her unparalelled Sufferings for my Sake.

WE, I ſay, having both triumphed over our Oppreſſors, now biting their Tongues for Pain at their Diſappointments, this troubles your Lordſhip, for your paternal Indulgence, that we may pay you our Duty on our Arrival at *London*, and implore your Bleſſing. I ſay, that we may, for that being now once more united,

united, nothing but the direct Will of Heaven, ſhall ever more ſunder us.

If your Lordſhip can yet judge us, who have perſevered through ſo many ſevere Trials, worthy of each other, candidly receive us, at laſt, as your Children; if not, for ever commit us to the Hand of that unerring Guide, who at ſuch Diſtance from your Lordſhip as you ſhall ſee fit, we truſt can, and doubt not will, defend us from all further Injuries: For as we have hitherto made it our Study to render ourſelves acceptable to him, whether in Exaltation or Abaſement, we ſhall ever depend upon him for Succour and Support.

Methinks your Lordſhip, from Experience ſhould judge, how vain is every human Effort againſt the ſuperior Force of Providence. How unbecoming of weak and tranſitory Creatures, is every Attempt in Oppoſition to the Supreme Will.----What have we done unworthy of Mankind, or of the Character of Chriſtians, that ſhould have cauſed your Lordſhip thus to have worried us?----- We ſaw,---we loved,---we married.---Is there ought criminal in this?-----

I hear it objected, that I have united my Nobility to Beggary, and a mean Family; but give me Leave to ſay, your Lordſhip may prove miſtaken in both; pray, pardon me, if I add, that my Mother, ſome few Years ago, might have objected the ſame to you, tho' indeed, when ſhe married, you had been bleſſed with the Gifts of Fortune in your own Perſon.

My Lord, if, as you ſuppoſe, I have married a Beggar, is that the leaſt Cauſe why a Father,

Father, thinking his Son wretched in his Choice, ſhould contribute all in his Power to make him more ſo ?-----Is ſhe a Perſon of mean Birth, am not I capable of enobling her ? and tho' my Family had a late Beginning, are you, Sir, the laſt Perſon upon Earth who is to put in for Preferment ?-----But, my Lord, give me Leave to ſay, that this may be ſo far from the real Caſe, that was this a proper Seaſon for expatiating, I might poſſibly prove both her Anceſtors, and immediate Parents, deſcended from ſo ancient and glittering a Stem, as under the moſt ſmiling Aſpect of our Stars, your lateſt Deſcendants may never be comparable to.

MY Lord! I hint not this from Motives of my own Regard to her only, but to ſatisfy your Lordſhip's Scruples about her Parentage; nor will I yet take upon me to determine, that ſhe may not prove of equal, nay, of ſuperior Opulence to any Lady yet propoſed to me.

THESE Advantages, as hers, I prize; without her, deſpiſe in any other Woman.

IF your Lordſhip ſhall in fatherly Affection command our Attendance, we are ready, in all Humility, to lay ourſelves at your Feet, as is our Duty; if not, pleaſe to ſignify your Pleaſure to the contrary, and you ſhall never more receive further Solicitation or Trouble from.

Your moſt dutiful

and obedient Son,

R. G.

WE were both very anxious for the Effects to be produced from this Epiſtle; but having as yet received no Anſwer, were afraid none would arrive before our Embarkation: For the very next Day, Wind and Weather permitting, we were to have ſailed; and indeed, had already been on Board, but that the Wind blowing no ſmall Gale into the Harbour, we had Notice given us to tarry till it chopt about again.

THERE is nothing more diſagreeable to the human Species, than uncertain Attendance: For as it creates Indolence to the Body, ſo it withdraws the Mind alſo from intending any thing elſe; but what we looked upon as an Hardſhip, proved eventually, moſt beneficial to us: For the ſame Wind which had confined us to the Shore, brought in the Pacquet from *England*, and in it, a Letter from the Earl's Houſe-Steward, as my Huſband concluded from the Superſcription, in an Hand ſo perfectly known to him.

CALLING me to him, his Lordſhip, in his little Council, laid open its Contents, which I ſhall tranſcribe from the Original itſelf.

My very good Lord,

DISCOVERING among your Father's Letters received ſome few Poſts ſince, one under your Lordſhip's Cover; leſt it might require more immediate Diſpatch, or that your Lordſhip might ſuffer by Delay, (for I was confident that every of your Lordſhip's Acts, could but collect a Luſtre from Expoſure,) I hope your Lordſhip will pardon my breaking the Seal, and peruſing it.

ME-

METHOUGHT, I therein read a Draught of your Lordſhip's Soul, a Compound of every gentle, manly, dutiful, and praiſe-worthy Quality; but it is my Misfortune to acquaint your Lordſhip, that all is vain, as to the Purpoſe for which it was intended, to wit, a Reconciliation with my old Lord.

ALAS! Sir, my Lord is ſo unhappy, as for ſome Months paſt to have been confined to his Chamber, having for good Part of that Time been raving mad; inſomuch, that I greatly feared his ever being otherwiſe; but it is lately turned to ſuch an Oppreſſion upon his Spirits, that he is now the Reverſe of what he has been, and overwhelmed with a deſpairing Melancholy; nor will he, though ſeemingly in bodily Health, be withdrawn from his Chamber, or ſuffer a ſingle Perſon to enter it, but myſelf, and old *John* who has lived ſo many Years with him.

I HAVE now Scores of Letters by me unopened; for neither durſt I preſume to break a Seal of them, contain what they will, neither will he hear the Mention of them, or attend to the leaſt Call of Buſineſs; and ſince my firſt attempting to put two or three of them into his Hands, at the beginning of his Diſorder, which he caſt into the Fire unopened, I have deſiſted from diſturbing him with more.

I MUST take Leave to inform your Lordſhip, (whether it may prove a good or bad Omen to your own Affairs, your Lordſhip will pleaſe to conſider) that juſt after reading a Paper of ſome Accounts of Shipping one Day, the firſt Expreſſions of his Delirium began, by invoking your Name, and repeating

it, and your Lady's, fifty Times together at leaſt, as alſo the Name of one *Thomaſin*; but who it is he meant, I know not. He then ordered his Chariot for an Airing; when paſſing by a little Stream near *Fulham*, he ordered the Coachman to ſtop, and alighting, he ran with all Fury towards the Water, and leaped in.

THERE were with him two Fellows on Horſeback, but their Surprize was ſo great, as ſcarce to leave them the Power of ſtirring to his Aſſiſtance, till recollecting, that the Loſs of a Moment, might endanger their Lord's Life, they galloped to the Bank, whence both jumping in together, though not without Difficulty, ſaved him.

DEMANDING then, how he did, he cried, where? O! where's my Son? He ſinks! He ſinks! O! ſave him! He's drowning. And from that Inſtant he continued raving about you, and *Thomaſin*, for the whole Time abovementioned, till now, as I ſaid before, he is grown more ſilent and melancholy.

I SHALL ſubmit to your Lordſhip's Direction; but am inclined to believe, your Preſence would prove a vaſt Conſolation to him; at worſt it is but making the Experiment.

I am, with the profoundeſt Duty,

Your Lordſhip's,

RICHARD POWEL.

WHAT

WHAT are your Lordſhip's Conjectures upon this Letter? ſaid I.

Biddy, replied he, there is ſo much Artifice and Deluſion ſtirring in the World, whereby we have been ſuch Sufferers, that (I am really aſhamed to confeſs it, but) a Man knows not how, implicitly, to credit his own Father, or any one belonging to him.

SURE *Powel*, added he, has not joined in the Cry, and is now upon the Scent to drive me into ſome new Wile. I am become ſo diffident of the whole Race, but of thee, my Dear, that I know not whom to truſt out of my own Sight. However, I ſhall not expoſe myſelf too openly to any of them.

IT may be, that my Father may have been touched with Remorſe for his ungentle Uſage of me, and may ſuſpect me dead: For undoubtedly, though *Powel* was ignorant of his Meaning, he had heard or read of the Ship being loſt, at the Time of his exclaiming ſo; and I can ſurmiſe no leſs, than that his Diſorder aroſe from thence. I ſay this is probable; but will not place over much Confidence in it.

I BEGG'D him ever to be upon the Watch, and to guard himſelf narrowly, for my Sake and his Children's; but my dear Lord, added I, what ſhall we do in *London* without a Houſe or Home, to ſhelter us there? Diſturb not thyſelf at that, replied his Lordſhip, the Man is unfortunate indeed, who has no Friend; but I ſhall rather apply to my Pocket-Companion, than trouble any one.

THE ſecond Day after the Receipt of *Powel*'s Letter, the Wind ſhifting, we found ourſelves on board, with *Thomas* and his Wife,

who proved moſt handy Aſſiſtants to us, both in our Paſſage, and Journey to *London*.

CHAP. XXII.

Arrive in London. *Interview with* Powel. Powel's *Diſcovery to his Maſter that his Son would ſee him. Manner how the Earl would receive them. They are diſtruſtful of it.*

WE arrived ſo late in Town, that we had no Opportunity of ſeeking a Lodging that Evening; ſo that making our Abode at the Inn for that Night, I diſpatched away Mrs. *Thomas* in the Morning, for the Purpoſe, and, by Noon, ſhe brought Word of her having made Proviſion for us, near the *Strand*, which ſhe hoped would pleaſe us. To this Apartment we forthwith repaired, and the very next Morning, ſent a Meſſage for *Powel* to attend us.

THE good Man, who had long been a Servant in the Earl's Family, and extremely fond of his Lordſhip from his Childhood; repeated, only ſomewhat more circumſtantially, the Contents of his Letter to us; aſſuring us, that his Lord was then in the ſame Condition, as when he wrote to us; but with this Variation, that it was as much as himſelf and *John* could do, to prevail with him for receiving the leaſt Suſtenance; and that he verily believed, his Lord, by his own Good-

will,

will, would ſtarve himſelf to Death, were it not for their preſſing Intreaties.

HE added, that ſitting whole Hours together, with his Elbow bent, and his Head upon his Hand, he would groan, ſigh, weep ſilently, and then ſtarting, as from a Dream, mutter to himſelf ſome obſcure Sentences; often therein, repeating the Words, my Son! my Son! and then dropt into his former Reverie: So that by his having been a conſtant Spectator of ſo diſtreſſed an Object, for ſo long a Time, almoſt Night and Day, *Powel* declared, his Life to be almoſt a Burden to him; and unleſs the Sight of his Lordſhip ſhould cauſe ſome Alteration in his Father, he ſhould have little Hopes of his Recovery.

HE then intreated his Lordſhip, either to wait upon his Father at once, without other previous Ceremony, or to permit him to mention the Inclination his Lordſhip had for viſiting him, if he would pleaſe to admit him to his Preſence, aſſuring his Lordſhip that he would faithfully report the Effect of his Conference with his Father, and would then ſubmit it to him, to act as he ſhould judge proper.

HIS Lordſhip related to *Powel*, the Dangers his Father had expoſed him to, and the providential Eſcapes he had been bleſſed with, which drew Tears in abundance from the old Man, and added, that though he would ſuffer him to mention him to the Earl, together with his Deſire of ſeeing him, yet, as he had before wrote him Word, that he never more would ſubject himſelf to a Separation from me; ſo he ſtill retained the ſame Reſolution,

in

in Life or Death, to adhere to me; and unleſs his Father would with the ſame Frankneſs admit us both to the Interview, as he would himſelf, he muſt beg leave, at all Events, to decline it.

Powel ſhook his Head, replying, that as his Lord had ever, both by Speech and Action, expreſſed himſelf ſo inveterately againſt me, he could not but ſuſpect his Errand would prove of no Effect; but offered, with all Deference, that his Lordſhip ſhould firſt pave the Way, and ſue for my Introduction.

Powel! ſaid his Lordſhip, I doubt not thy Fidelity, nor diſbelieve that you propound to me the Advice yourſelf eſteems moſt feaſible; but my Determination is unalterable, that nothing but my Father's candid Reception of my Wife, equally with myſelf, ſhall ever prevail with me to approach his Preſence more: So urge it to me no further.

His Lordſhip aſked *Powel* if he could give any Account of his Children? who ſaid, he had never once heard them mentioned by his Lord.

His Lordſhip then informed him of all that had befallen me in *Ireland*, and what Inſtruments his Lordſhip had retained for that Purpoſe, and how they were diſpoſed of; when the old Man ſtarting, replied, that his Lordſhip had unriddled a Myſtery to him, which had occaſioned his no ſmall Admiration; and that was, what had become of Mr. *Stringer*, who had uſed to be his Lord's Right-hand.

He ſaid, that his Lord had received numberleſs Letters from him, for ſome Months paſt;

paſt; and that ſoon after the firſt Symptoms of his Lord's Diſorder, he having delivered him one of them, which his Lord had thrown into the Fire unopened, he never offered at preſenting any more of them to him, for fear of the ſame Fate; but had them all ſtill by him.

I HINTING, that ſince *Stringer*'s Confinement, he had informed us, that our Children were all at his Lordſhip's Charity-ſchool in *Lancaſhire*; *Powel* anſwered, that he had alſo a Letter then by him, from that Schoolmaſter, to his Lord, which by the Time of its Receipt, we both judged to have been wrote, in Conſequence of his Lordſhip's to him; but though my Curioſity was extremely active for the Knowledge of its Contents, I ſubmitted to remain ignorant, rather than prevail for a Breach of Truſt in *Powel*; who after what had paſſed, left us, in order to ſound his Lord, how acceptable our Admiſſion might prove to him, if, as he added, he ſhould be able to draw any Anſwer from him at all: For it was not ſeldom that he was diſappointed, let the Requeſt be what it would.

WE were determined to wait the Event of *Powel*'s Application, before we made the leaſt Change in our Houſhold: For having *Thomas* and his Wife with us, they aſſiſted in all Capacities; nor would we encumber ourſelves with a greater Train, till we were ſatisfied what we had to truſt to, and where we ſhould ſettle our Family.

Powel, who had by no means been unactive in our Affair, returned to us the next Morning, with far more Glee on his Countenance,

tenance, than when he had left us. What News? *Powel*, ſaid his Lordſhip.----O! Sir, ſaid he, I have joyful Tidings for you both; and ſuch, if I can fathom your Lordſhip's Mind, as will no leſs delight you to hear, than me to deliver. You may, and I hope will, ſtill prove the happy Son, of a kind Father.

My Lord, added he, I took the Opportunity of the Gloom of Night, after all the Family were in Bed, ſave his Lordſhip and myſelf, (it proving my Turn to ſit up with him) as the Candles were burnt to ſo long Snuffs, as ſcarce to aſſiſt us with the Sight of each other, to drop the Name of Lord *G---r---d*.

Ha! ſaid my Lord.—What!—Where!—there!—I ſee him.—I ſee him, ſaid he, ſtarting ghaſtfully.—Ah! pale Corps, added he,—Alas! what would'ſt thou?—Ha! not alone.—Thy Wife with thee.—Aid me!—aid me!—*Powel*.

He was then riſing from his Chair, and proceeding with his Inconſiſtencies; when I again ſeated him. My good Lord, ſaid I, I have a Meſſage from my young Lord to your Honour. He has then appeared to thee? demanded he, I then replied, that Lord *G---r---d* had ſent for me, and had charged me with a Meſſage to his Honour. A Call to meet him, ſaid the Earl.———I know it was he beckoned me,———my deareſt Son,———I can't ſtay long behind thee,——Nature and Age forbid my lingering here.——Yes, yes, I have attoned, and will, for

for thy Misfortunes.——Urge me not then from Earth before my Time.——I know thou'rt happy,---would I were ſo too. ——Let me not unrepentant fall.----'Tis not the Joy of Life that holds me longer here, but to compenſate for thy dire Calamities.----Excuſe me to my Daughter.---Lay not her Weight upon my aged Shoulders.---I muſt, I will not,---aid me! aid me! *Powel.*

BELIEVE me, Sir, continued *Powel*, that what with the Horror of the ſhadowy Gloom, his Lordſhip's Agony, now ſinking backwards in his Chair; I never was ſo terrified in my whole Life before. Nay, I could have ſworn, that I then ſaw Shapes moving about the Room, though imperſonate of any one; till checking my Indulgence of ſuch Deluſions, I ran and ſnuffed the Candles; when taking more Heart, I rouſed up my Lord alſo, aſſuring him, that both you and your Lady, were in good Health; were come to Town, and begged leave to pay your Duties to him.

WHY would you thus impoſe upon me? ſaid his Lordſhip. O! that they were!—— Time cannot be recalled.——Myſelf muſt viſit them,——they never me.

Powel told us, that he then raiſing his Voice, inſiſted on what he had ſaid to be true; wondering that his Lordſhip ſhould ſuſpect him of an Impoſition: When he ſaid, his Lord graſping his Hand, proceeded,—— Canſt thou in Conſcience ſay, Lord *G--r--d* lives? I do promiſe your Honour, ſaid *Powel*, that he is alive, and the Lady his Wife; but their Hearts yearn ſo after you, that they cannot enjoy

enjoy themſelves, till they can pay their Duties to your Lordſhip.

WHERE are they *Powel?* ſaid he. At their Lodgings, my Lord, anſwered I; waiting your Permiſſion to attend you. —Both living? ſaid the Earl.——Both, my Lord, added I.

How vain are our Conceits! ſaid the Earl. Both living, ſay you?—Whence iſſues this Flux of Bleſſing?---Good Heaven! How haſt thou interpoſed to ſave me?——Haſt thou not heard the Ship *Thomaſin* was loſt—My Son,---I ſay, Lord *G---r---d* ſail'd in her.—Thy Story is falſe.--It is all a blank Chimera.--Tell me no more of my Son,--my Daughter lives.

MY Lord, ſaid I, finding him begin to rave again, I have not only ſeen him, but have it under his own Hand, in a Letter to your Honour.----Pray read it my Lord.----Blockhead! ſaid his Lordſhip, have done,---takeſt thou me for a Wizard?---I am no Adept in Nature's Myſteries;--nor can I read the Language of the Shades.--A Letter, ſaidſt thou?--let me view its Form--I then producing it;--Amazing! why it feels of human Temperament, ſaid the Earl.--It ſeems of Subſtance to ſuſtain the Touch.---Unfold it then, and read.

HE then began, and read:

Honoured Sir, the benign Hand of Providence.

---And ſo proceeding, that Part of your Letter where the Works of Providence are particularly taken notice of, replied, as calmly as ever he ſpoke in his Life, that he was well ſatis-

ſatisfied, his Son had imputed his Eſcape to its proper Cauſe, when he aſcribed it to Providence.--As for his own Miſconduct in the Affair, he ſaid, he was wholly aſhamed of it; but as Heaven had manifeſted itſelf in Preſervation of the Guiltleſs, he ſhould from thenceforth join Intereſt with that All-powerful Arm, in defending what that had ſo miraculouſly ſupported.

HE then greedily caught both the Letter and Candle into his Hand, and read over the Remainder of it to himſelf, making Reflections as he proceeded; ſuch as, Curſed Villainy!--My Son is in the right!---Good Woman!---Impoſſible!---and ſo on, till having perſued it through, he delivered it back to me again.

ADMIT them together, ſaid the Earl, that I will.--No, no, never more to be ſundered by me, I'll promiſe them---How might I have deſtroyed the End of every my Aim in Life, --had not our Actions been directed by far abler Guidance than our own Forecaſt?---Surely, in all my paſt Succeſſes in Life, which I have hitherto falſely aſcribed to my own Policy, I have only been made the Inſtrument for advancing that truly honourable Man Lord *G--r--d*.

TRUE! he has ſuſtained Hardſhips, almoſt beyond Endurance, from a Father;----but whom have I injured, ſave myſelf?--He can behold my Face, and thoſe of all Mankind without a Bluſh, whilſt I muſt ſtand confounded in my paſt Folly; nor can I gain Aſſurance to receive his firſt Salutes.——O Pride! O Villainy! how flyeſt thou the

Light! How juſtly hideſt thou thy Head, and ſhelterest thyſelf in thy beloved Darkneſs!

Powel, ſaid the Earl, I cannot ſee them till they have forgiven me: Nor can I poſtpone their Viſit. Aſſure them in the Morning of my Willingneſs to admit them; but that being diſordered, and obliged to keep my Bed, I muſt receive them in my Chamber.---Before they arrive, darken my Room, cloſe my Bed, and leave the reſt to me.

Powel, having made this unreſerved Declaration to us, we agreed to wait upon the Earl after Dinner; but his Lordſhip having ſo often been trapanned, by repeated Stratagems, could not refrain from ſome Expreſſions of his Diffidence in his Father's Curteſy, and more eſpecially from the Manner in which we were to be received; for that in the dark, he ſaid, what Snares might not be laid for us? what Baſeneſs not perpetrated, which even the Actors themſelves would ſhrink at in the Face of Day; not that he feared ſo much for himſelf as on my account: For after ſo many Eſcapes, to be at laſt baffled, and that through our own Incaution too, would adminiſter ſuch Cauſe for Self-condemnation, as he ſhould never be able to overcome.

HEARING his Lordſhip's Scruples, *Powel* replied, that he could no-ways blame his Lordſhip's Diffidence; but as to the preſent Caſe, he would pawn his Honour, nay his Life, for his old Lord's Sincerity; and that himſelf would become reſponſible for our Safe-conduct. But my dear Lord might have ſpared his Jealouſies, as well as *Powel* his Engagements,

gagement, as we afterwards found, when we came to put it to a Trial.

CHAP. XXIII.

Lord G---r---d *and* Biddy's *Reception at the Earl's. Reconciliation. Settle with the Earl.* Thomas, *and Wife, ſettle in the Earl's Family. The Earl enquires into* Biddy's *Family. Diſcredits* Thomas's *Story. Orders it to be examined into.*

OUR Hearts portended all the way we went to the Earl's, that ſome Miſchief or other awaited us there; but how did we tremble, upon our Introduction, by *Powel*, into the Stage of Action! that tremendous Darkneſs of the Room of Audience! where, the ſole Sparkle of Light that appeared to us, iſſued from the dying Embers of a ſmall Fire, whoſe expiring Rays tinged all that lay within their Compaſs with a more than tawny Hue; ſo that every Chair preſenting us with an indeſcriptible ſomewhat, reminding us of Aſſaſſinations, or ſome like Violence.

HIS Lordſhip interlinked my Arm in his, determined but to part with me and Life together, and thus entwined, *Powel* uſhered us up to the ſick Man's Pavilion, where, inſtantly his Lordſhip ſinking upon his Knees, drew me to a Participation of his Poſture; but had not our Bodies interpoſed between the pretended ſick Earl and the languiſhing Cinders, we might as well have been kneeling in

the Street, as before him, for ought that he could have otherwiſe diſtinguiſhed of us.

WE both begged his Bleſſing, by my dear Lord our Orator; teſtified our Sorrow for his Indiſpoſition, and that we ſhould, above all Things, pray for the ſpeedy Eſtabliſhment of his Lordſhip's Health, long Life, and Felicity.

HEAVEN preſerve my generous Son and Daughter, ſaid the Earl; too pious for ſo undiſcerning a Father. His Lordſhip melting into Tears at his Father's Speech, was offering at a Reply, which the Earl prevented, by aſſuring us, that ſince he had regulated his Reflections, ſolely from diſpaſſionate Judgment, he had eſteemed himſelf one of the moſt wretched of the human Species, in ſubmitting to the Call of his Paſſions, in Contradiction to the cleareſt Evidences of his Underſtanding, tho' they were not the ſole Cauſe of the Perſecutions we had both ſuffered: For that, furious as his Rancour had been againſt us, yet, from his own mere Motives, he had never been prevailed upon to oppreſs us in the many Shapes he had practiſed, nor could he have ſo done, but for the daily Inſtigations of that vile Raſcal *Stringer*, who had ſpirited him up againſt us.

CAN you both, my deareſt Children, ſaid he, caſt a pleaſurable Eye upon a relenting Parent, and forget the Oppreſſions he has been guilty of? O! my deareſt Lord, ſaid my Huſband, name it not; the Price is ſcarcely to be felt, that purchaſes your Smiles upon this Lady; and ſince all that's paſt,

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concludes but in that happy Event, as your Lordſhip's Reſentment was, at firſt, but too juſtly founded, ſo we ſhall ever eſteem what has hitherto befallen us, but as the ſlighteſt Puniſhment for our Demerits.

Powel! ſaid the Earl, draw back my Curtains, enlighten the Room, let me behold thoſe angelic Faces, which will ruſh in upon me with ſuch a Torrent of Delight. I will no longer dread the Expoſure of my Perſon to ſuch a Fund of Clemency.

THE Light, by this Time flowing in upon us, the Earl ſtep'd from off his Bed (for he had only laid himſelf thereon) and after embracing us both, he called me his Daughter, proteſting he ſhould ever after regard me as his own Child. He would not part with us out of his own Houſe again; but declared, by his own Conſent, we ſhould never more leave him. He had Room enough for us, he ſaid, and that we ſhould either be welcome to his Table, for ourſelves and Dependants, or keep our ſeparate Houſhold, at his Expence, as we ſhould like beſt; then taking me to a Cabinet in my late Mother's Dreſſing-Room, he preſented me with moſt of her Jewels, and ſeveral other valuable Effects, as an Earneſt of his future Favour to me.

IN ſhort, our Affairs now wore ſuch a new Face, and our Situation was ſo agreeable to ourſelves, and pleaſing to our Father, after pitching our Tent for a ſhort Space with him, that having ſent Mrs. *Thomas* with a Servant, in the Earl's Coach, for the Children, upon their Arrival, no way of Life upon Earth could be more felicitous than

ours; nor could any Father expreſs more Tenderneſs for his own Offspring, than the Earl did upon every Occaſion for me: For not only every part of his domeſtic Affairs were wholly committed to my Management, but whatever either belonged to his own Perſon, or related to his younger Children, or his Eſtate, moved not without the Direction of my Finger. Nay, he was ſcarce ever pleaſed but in my Company, inſomuch that my deareſt Lord would often ſay, that was not the Earl his own Father, he ſhould have all the Reaſon in the World to be jealous of him.

His Lordſhip diſcharged *Thomas*'s Debts, and I recommending him for an honeſt and ingenious Hand to the Earl, neither himſelf or his Wife ever after left us: For as ſhe was a private Companion for me, ſo he became a neceſſary Hand in the Family, making twice as much of it a Year, by that Means, as he could have gained by the Inveſtitute of any regular Poſt at a ſtated Salary.

After we had perfectly ſettled the Oeconomy of our Houſhold, as I was ſitting with the Earl one Day, intent upon a Piece of Needle-work, Daughter! ſaid he, I have, over and over again, peruſed a letter that my Son ſent me from *Ireland*, and have as often found myſelf in the Dark as to ſome peculiar Expreſſions in it.

I desired him to inform me what they were, for that poſſibly I might be able to clear them up to him. My Son, ſaid he, writes me, that you are of an antient and honourable Family, and may be a greater Fortune

Fortune to him than I am aware of, or to that Purpoſe; which is what I never before heard, neither chooſe I to aſk him about it, leſt it ſhould have only been a Flight of his own, and might make him uneaſy at being recalled.

MY Colour came and went prodigiouſly, neither could I tell how I ſhould come off; for, at all Events, I ſuſpected that the Truth would be attended with fatal Conſequences, and might unhinge all that good Underſtanding then ſubſiſting between us; not only becauſe my Production would appear to have been illegitimate, but likewiſe that a Diſcloſure of it would, by caſting a Slur upon his late Lady, glance ſomewhat of a Reflection upon himſelf; however, be that as it would, I had been too great a Sufferer by a Lie already, ever to be caught in the ſame Nooſe again; and as for my Palliative or Shift, it bordered ſo much upon Falſity, and I ſo utterly abhorred the Thought of it, that I would rather have run any Hazard than have fallen under ſuch a Dilemma. I therefore referred him to his Lordſhip, as the propereſt for explaining his own Meaning.

THE Earl made no more Words of it at that Time, which gave me an Opportunity of diſcourſing my Huſband upon it, and adviſing with him how to behave, in caſe of a Repetition of the Earl's Demand; for that, undoubtedly, it was not the laſt Time I ſhould hear of it; and greatly afraid I was, that when once the Truth ſhould be diſcovered, we ſhould be all in a Flame again.

HIS

His Lordſhip replied, that he had made but a ſinge Act of his Repentance, ever ſince he had falſified his Word to his Father about our Marriage, and whilſt he could remain Maſter of his own Reſolution, he ſhould never put it to the Venture again; proteſting, that ſhould his Father put the Queſtion to him, he would make no Difficulty of expoſing the naked Truth in as becoming Terms as poſſible, on Lady *Betty*'s Part, and councelled me to do the like, let his Father take it as he would.

Little more than a Week had paſſed before the Earl had renewed his Demand upon me; and as I muſt needs know, he ſaid, who were my Parents, deſired me to deal ingenuouſly with him.

I replied, that having ſpent but a ſmall Portion of my Time with my real Parents, I was not ſo well able, poſitively, to aſſert how I came into Life, as a Perſon in his Lordſhip's Family was, who was preſent at my Birth, and if it ſo pleaſed his Lordſhip, would make a moſt punctual Reply to his Demand. I then named Mrs. *Thomas*, for whoſe Child, I told him, I had ever paſſed, till herſelf had better informed me.

The Earl replied, that a genuine Solution in the Caſe, would prove the more acceptable to him, as it might diſcharge from his Mind the Imputation of a Falſity to his Son, in the Account he had ſent him, or even the leaſt intentional Impoſition upon him, and deſiring me to call her in, inſiſted upon my Orders, that ſhe would conceal nothing from him.

Having

HAVING introduced Mrs. *Thomas*, and previouſly, in his Lordſhip's Hearing, prepared her for the Delivery of the ſole Truth, I thought to have left them together, and was withdrawing; but the Earl would by no means ſuffer me, tho' I ſate upon Thorns all the while ſhe was under Examination, leſt the Earl, diſcrediting her Report, ſhould wreak his Vengeance upon me, as a Confederate in her Fraud.

HIS Impatience at ſome Parts of her Story, would not permit her to finiſh it, till ſhe had cleared them Article by Article; then calling me to him, my dear Child, ſaid he, what Authority can this Woman have, and from whom, to caſt a Blemiſh upon my deceaſed Wife? Think you, that ſhe can be your Friend, who, at my Expence, ſhall blaſt Lady *Betty*'s Character to ſo heinous a Degree, as to make a Proſtitute of her? Nay, upon yourſelf too, as to make you the illegitimate Iſſue of that Adultery? How could you, without juſt Indignation againſt her, ſuffer her to relate all this Scandal?

MY dear Lord, ſaid I, Mrs. *Thomas* hath further to add, what, could we make appear, would clear up the Truth of her Report to a Demonſtration: For I could not diſcredit, till I could diſprove her, having ever known her for a very honeſt Woman; and that is, ſhe ſays her Lady declared to her, that at her Marriage with your Lordſhip, ſhe reſerved a Power over her Eſtate, in order the better to enable her to act nobly by me, at her Death. Now, your Lordſhip muſt know, whether her Ladyſhip left any Will behind her, and if ſhe did,

did, and I am therein diſtinguiſhed by any peculiar Marks, not appropriable to a Stranger, her Relation may ſtill be true.

CHILD! ſaid the Earl, it muſt needs be all a Forgery, and trumped up by this vile Woman, to amuſe, and ingratiate herſelf to you, I could place no Faith in a thouſand ſuch hearſy Evidences, in ſuch a Caſe as this, where ſo valuable a Lady's Memory lay at Stake.

YOUR Lordſhip, ſaid I, hath heard it from her own Mouth; and having aſſerted herſelf to have been preſent at my Birth, I own, it wrought a Belief in me; eſpecially, as her Ladyſhip had ever provided for me, and was ſo exceedingly fond of me; though indeed, only under the Name of my Godmother.

WOMAN! ſaid the Earl, turning to Mrs. *Thomas*, anſwer me faithfuly; was you preſent at the Birth of this Lady? I was my Lord, ſaid ſhe, at *Labaur*, in *Languedoc*; and whatever I have hitherto revealed to your Lordſhip, is moſt literally true; as alſo, that my Lady always ſaid ſhe would do great Things for her Ladyſhip here, nor do I in the leaſt queſtion but ſhe has, did we but know with whom it was intruſted; and I have informed her Ladyſhip, where I judge it to be moſt likely to be placed.

NAME the Perſon, ſaid the Earl; when ſhe mentioning Mr. *Corbet*; the Earl pauſed. *Corbet*, ſaid he, ſhe regarded for his Honeſty and Judgment in Men and Things, I well remember; but let me tell you, it will be incumbent upon you, to make good your Allegation, or you ſhall incur the Height of my Diſpleaſure.

I WAS

I WAS under ſuch Concern for Mrs. *Thomas*, though the Earl made no Alteration in his Behaviour to me, that I could not reſt till I had engaged my Huſband, by ſome Means or other to find out *Corbet*; which he ſoon becoming as anxious for as myſelf, we ſet out for *Lincolnſhire*, upon our Enquiry.

CHAP. XXIV.

His Lordſhip and Biddy *go in ſearch of* Corbet. *Find him dying. Scruples to deliver without Mrs.* Thomas. *She arrives.* Corbet *delivers* Biddy *a Caſket. Contents unknown. Reflections on* Corbet's *Death. Opens the Caſket before the Earl. Account of its Contents. The Earl convinced. Letter for* Biddy. *Letter from* Stringer. *His Cataſtrophe. Concluſion.*

AFTER ſome Weeks ſearch in *Lincolnſhire*, we arrived at our wiſh'd for Port, in the very Criſis of Time for our Purpoſe.

Corbet was very ancient and infirm, and had been bed-ridden, through a Decay of Nature, for ſome Months. He was then ſo deaf, that we could ſcarce make him hear us. He was a Batchelor, and had a Maiden-Siſter, but two Years his junior, for his Houſekeeper; who having her Intellects in ſomewhat greater Degree, (though ſhe was upwards of four-ſcore) after almoſt fruitleſs Application to the old Gentleman, addreſſing ourſelves to her, ſhe no ſooner heard mention of Lady *Betty*'s Name, than

than having herſelf formerly been a Servant to her Ladyſhip's Grandmother, ſhe attended pleaſurably to our Errand; and by her Mediation, we obtained an Anſwer from *Corbet*, of what we ſought after: For no ſooner was he apprized of our Buſineſs, than recollecting himſelf, he replied, that he remembered her Ladyſhip, not long after her Marriage, had depoſited in his Hands a ſmall Caſket, which ſhe told him would be demanded from him by her God-daughter, *Biddy Farmer*, after her Deceaſe, according to Directions ſhe ſhould leave behind her for that Purpoſe; and at the ſame Time, gave him a ſtrict Charge, to deliver it to no one but herſelf.

He added, that he was unacquainted with its Contents; neither would he part with it, to any one but her, to whom it was directed; but wiſhed ſhe would come for it, that he might be diſcharged of his Truſt before he died. I replied, that my name was *Bridget Farmer*, and that I was his Lady's God-daughter, giving him Abundance of circumſtancial Evidence, of the Truth of what I alledged; but not all I could ſay, added to his Lordſhip's Aſſeveration of its Veracity, could ſo much as procure us a Sight of the Depoſit, he perſiſting, that he never would produce it, till he was ſatisfied he could deliver it into the identical Hands of *Bridget Farmer*.

Old *Corbet*, appearing ſo peremptory, and but little Likelihood offering, of his holding out for many Days longer; his Lordſhip and I were driven to ſuch a Nonplus, to find Means for his Conviction, that we feared we muſt have left our Buſineſs undone at the laſt, till I be-

I bethought myſelf, that Mrs. *Thomas* having lived ſo many Years with my Mother, there could be little Queſtion but Mr. *Corbet* muſt remember her; ſo that I deſired his Siſter to aſk him, if he did not remember *Mary Lee*, who afterwards married *Giles Farmer*, her Ladyſhip's Chairman? He anſwered, very well, and to her Daughter the Caſket was to be delivered, and to her only. His Siſter then, at my Requeſt, further demanded, if he would deliver it me upon her avouching me her Daughter? Without Scruple, he ſaid, for he ſhould die much more peaceably, ſo ſoon as he ſhould be aſſured his Truſt was duly executed: And had he been able, for ſome Years, to have reached *London*, it ſhould never have lain in his Hands ſo long: For that it had ſolely grieved him, to think it might poſſibly be wrongly diſpoſed of at laſt.

No ſooner had we reduced our Matters to this Iſſue, than we diſpatched a Meſſenger to Mrs. *Thomas*, ordering her, with all Expedition to attend us at *Alford*; and in order to ſpur her forward the more ſpeedily, we added, that by a Moment's unneceſſary Delay, ſhe might arrive too late to be ſerviceable to us: For that we hourly expected old *Corbet*'s Diſſolution.

THE good Woman, waiting no further Argument than our Requeſt; hiring a Coach and Four, ſet out within an Hour after the Receipt of his Lordſhip's Meſſage, and was with us at *Alford*, the ſecond Evening, as we were expecting *Corbet's* Departure every Moment. His Sight was entirely gone, and his hearing had been too weak for our Voices, for

the whole paſt Day; notwithſtanding which, no ſooner had Mrs. *Thomas* entered the Room, and began upon her Compliments to his Lordſhip and me, than *Corbet*, as if aided by more than human Aſſiſtance, cried out, What? have you Mrs. *Farmer* there?

She then taking him by the Hand, and aſking how he did; I cannot ſee thee, *Mary*, ſaid he; but I am as certain I have thee by the Hand, as if I did.---Be quick, my Time is ſhort, and long have I waited for this Hour. Tell me then, and tell me truly, added he, who is that Woman, who ſays ſhe is Lord *G--r--d*'s Wife?

She is my Daughter, *Biddy Farmer*, anſwered ſhe; you knew *Giles Farmer*, my late Huſband, Mr. *Corbet*; and if you remember, my Lady was her Godmother, and always very kind to her. Good Mrs. *Farmer*, I do remember it well, ſaid the old Man.

Then dictating to his Siſter, from whence to fetch the Box, he ordered her to bring it to him; and calling to Mrs. *Thomas*, ſpeak to me, *Mary*, ſaid he, that I may know whereabouts you are; which ſhe did. Now, take your Daughter's Hand, and give it me; ſhe did ſo. When having my Right-hand in his left, he with his right, delivered the Caſket into mine. Have you faſt Hold of it? ſaid he. I replied, yes; then Heaven grant, ſaid he, that I may have made a juſt Delivery. Nor have I a further Call in Life, than to wiſh you all Comfort and Happineſs with your new Acquiſition; for tho' I am ignorant of its Contents, yet, from ſeveral Paſſages at the committing it to my Charge, I am well aſſured you are in the

Poſſeſſion

Poſſeſſion of no mean Prize. Then turning his Face from us, he ſoon after fetched a Sigh, and expired.

His Lordſhip who had been a Spectator of this Scene, was ſo delighted at the Exactneſs and Punctuality of old *Corbet*'s Behaviour, that taking me by the Hand, my dear *Biddy*, ſaid he, Heaven grant my End to be like this good Man's. With what Calmneſs and Compoſure can this good Chriſtian, having compleated the Buſineſs allotted him in Life, lay it down for a glorious Eternity? What a bleſſed Thing is it, at the latter End of the Day, to be able to ſay, without Dread or Trembling, my Courſe is run;--- my Toil is ended;--- I have nothing more to care for here.--- I can go to reſt for ever.

How widely different, think you, are the Sentiments of *Stringer*, and his Aſſociates, who in the Anguiſh of their Souls, cannot but ſay, we have travelled in a wrong Track, we have been an Offence to Mankind, a Goad to ourſelves, and want ſtill more Time to re-travel the By-patchs we have wandered in; but the farther we proceed, the more are we entangled; nor can our Conſciences be at reſt, or our Souls depart in Peace; but when the final Separation comes, muſt be wrung from us, not in gentle Breathings, but in unutterable Groanings.

His Lordſhip was for opening the Caſket at once; but I, who had his Father's good Opinion at Heart, beyond any Profit that might redound to me from its Contents, being inclinable to force the Locks, only in his Preſence, that he might not have the leaſt

Cauſe to ſurmiſe a Deceit, whatever ſhould be found in it; his Lordſhip acquieſced: For I added, that now it was in our own Power, a few Days more or leſs could be of no material Signification to us, who had already been ſo long deprived of it.

THE Earl, our Father, who had abundantly wondered at our Stay, and had with longing Impatience waited to ſee what we had made of our Journey; tho' he expected no leſs than that we had been upon a wild-gooſe Chace, received us moſt lovingly; when obſerving our Treaſure under my Huſband's Arm, what have we here, Son? ſaid he; his Lordſhip replied, we had hitherto reſerved that as a Secret, even from ourſelves, till a full Diſcovery ſhould be made in your Lordſhip's Preſence.

IN ſhort, but few more Words paſſed between us, before we fell to work with the Caſket; but it being ſecured by two Locks, and the Earl ſaying, he was ſure he had before ſeen it, and that if it ever was his late Wife's, he muſt be preſumed to have the Keys belonging to it, in a Bunch of her late Ladyſhips, in her Cabinet, into which he had ſcarce ever looked further than to have diſcovered that many ſuch were there; we all aſcended into her Ladyſhip's Dreſſing-room, where it ſtood; and after making a few Experiments, ſoon found which was for our Purpoſe.

I WOULD have had the Earl to have opened it, but he recommended that Office to his Lordſhip, who conſigned it over to me, as it was to me, he ſaid, that it was directed: So taking it into my Lap, I unlocked it.

MY Heart beat ſo violently as I was lifting up the Cover of this little Repoſitory, that I was ready to die away; and hundreds of tranſient Surmiſes flaſhed through my Mind, which immediately vaniſhing, gave Place to others ready to intrude themſelves upon me; which, as ſoon alſo diſappeared; till the Contents, unfolding themſelves gradually to View, collected my Thoughts wholly upon the Individuals, as they ſeverally preſented to us.

FIRST, a Covering of green Velvet, which over-ſpread the whole Surface, claimed a Removal; to which ſucceeded a Layer of fine Cotton; but we had no ſooner diſplaced this than a moſt exquiſitely chaſed Gold Watch, ſet with Diamonds, diſplayed its Charms, to the Admiration of each Eye preſent. We looked upon each other, and again upon that, as if purpoſely combining not to moleſt it: for not one of us had as yet extended a Finger towards it; till taking it into my Hand, and ſurveying it, I preſented it to my Father, who having curſorily ſurrounded it with his Eye, delivered it to his Son, who was juſt laying it by, when his Lordſhip obſerving two very ſmall Pictures of a Lady and a Gentleman, enamelled, hanging to the Chain, and commending the Workmanſhip, ſaid, that ſurely the Lady's muſt have been drawn for her late Ladyſhip; and telling the Earl, that in his Life he never beheld ſo well executed a Piece till then, his Father, with his Spectacles examining it very accurately, declared it to be his Wife; but wondered that he ſhould never have ſeen it before.

THEN taking a View of the Gentleman's Picture, his Countenance changed, his Eyebrows contracted, and his Lips roſe, till looking hard at me, then at the Picture, and again wiſhfully at me,--*Biddy*, my dear Child, ſaid he, Mrs. *Thomas*'s Story is true. I am now joyfully convinced of it, unleſs yourſelf ſat for this Picture.——This Face, my Dear, ſaid he, is thine, and thine, this Picture. It is my Lord Duke's.—I knew him well; nor breathed a finer Gentleman on Earth. —— Thou art his Daughter; but I could have wiſhed it had not been by thy Mother.

I BURST into Tears, ready to have broken my Heart.——What aileth thee, my Dear? ſaid the Earl. Thou couldſt not have choſen a more acceptable Father to me, why weepeſt thou then? O! my dear Lord, ſaid I, it is not for that his Grace was my Father, but leſt my Birth, reflecting on your Lady, ſhould cauſe an Abatement of your Regard for me, which I prize at ſo ineſtimable a Rate as not to part with for the whole Globe.

THE Earl then claſping me to his Breaſt, thy Virtues, Child, ſaid he, are perſonal, and muſt forever conjoin my Affection to thee; nor can any unguarded Failing of thy Mother diſlodge thee from my Heart. No, my Dear, ſince thy Birth was thus, it proves the higheſt Satisfaction to me that thou art the Iſſue of ſo good a Woman; for however ſhe might have been overtaken, it was long before ſhe was my Wife; and ſince that, my own Heart vouches for her Honour and Conſtancy to my Bed. The beſt of us are ſubject to Failings, and Mrs. *Thomas* has in a great Meaſure made me eaſy as to thoſe of thy Mother. ALL

ALL my Fears being baniſhed, we laid aſide the Watch, and diſplacing of the Cotton it had been bedded in, we extracted three black Caſes of exceeding fine Jewels, of different Sorts, but ſet in an old faſhioned Manner, and probably were my Great-Grandmothers; but we eſtimated them at a vaſt Value; and under theſe lay a Letter directed to Miſs *Biddy Farmer*.

When each of us had read over the Superſcription, as if by ſudden Impulſe, we delivered it round from one to the other, ſeveral Times, before either of us offered at a Breach of the Seal, till after each of us had for a Time diſcanted upon its ſuppoſed Contents, I delivered it to my Father, at the ſame Time declaring, that ſince he was ſo good as to impute no Blame to me, nor to ſlacken his eſteem for me, by Reaſon of any Tranſaction of my Parents, I was perfectly eaſy as to its Contents, let them be what they would.

The Earl then forcing the Seal, began.

My deareſt Child!

WHEN you ſhall lay this before you, in me you muſt recall your Mother. It will be too late for me, at your Reading this, to ſtudy a Covering for my Shame, if Shame it could be to have loved, and been beloved, by the ſole Mirrour of Perfection in his Age. Nature was not only profuſe to him in the Formation of his Perſon, but in every Endowment of his Mind, Art had outdone its Maſterpiece.

I HAD not now had Reaſon for a Bluſh, in the Acceptation of Mankind, had not the unreaſonable

reaſonable and unmeaning Laws of my Country prevented our Union in Wedlock.——I need not, ſurely, tell thee I mean with his Grace the Duke of *R —— gh.*

CHARGE me not my Daughter with Levity, but Love; ſuch Love, as we not being able to make Proviſion for in the honourable Way we both choſe, at length ſubjected us to a Breach of our Natures, ſtill abhorrent of a deliberate Crime, would have ſtarted at the Commiſſion of, had any juſt impediment intervened to have obligated our Conſciences to the contrary.

THOU, deareſt Offspring of my Virgin Affection, ſhould ever my Lord attain to the Knowledge of my Failing, aſſure him, that being his, my Heart had never erred.——Claim his Protection to thyſelf; and as the Parchment which ſupports this will ſufficiently enrich thee, if thy other good Qualities can but aim at equalling Lord *G---r---d*'s, make it my dying Requeſt to my ever honoured Lord, that he will make you one.

I AM ſenſible I touch a String that may jar; but my laſt Prayer to Heaven will be thy Proſperity; and that, if poſſible, in the Manner I have hinted. Nay, I am ſo ſecure in Lord *G---r---d*'s honeſt Heart and Gentleneſs of Diſpoſition, that failing of my Wiſhes with him, will, in my Opinion, be preferable to thy Wedlock with any other Man.

I LEAVE you, Child, to the Guidance of Providence and your own Virtues. Now, no more, Your affectionate Mother,

E— B——n.

THIS Epiſtle being ended, we hung our Heads, waiting whoſe Tongue ſhould firſt move

move in Condemnation or Approval of what we had heard, when the Earl applying to his Son, Lord *G---r---d*, ſaid he, why ſo ſerious? declare yourſelf upon the Subject of this Letter before us.

MY Lord, ſaid my Huſband, it would ill become me to comment upon what ſo nearly concerns your Lordſhip, till I ſhall firſt be warranted from your Sentiments. As for my own Part my Thoughts are ready collected, and wait but Utterance; neither have I the leaſt Diſpute with myſelf that I ſhall ever ſee Reaſon to alter them, wherefore I ſhall be glad to hear that your Lordſhip's accord to them.

MY Opinion, ſaid the Earl, will waſte little Time in delivering; for tho' it might have pleaſed me better that my Daughter's Mother had not proved my Wife, yet I am ſo well ſatisfied that the Changes in my Family, and the Oppoſition my Views have met with, muſt have been conducted by a more penetrating Wiſdom than I can boaſt, that I am clearly convinced, all has befallen us more advantageouſly than my Forecaſt could have determined it; and my dear Children, let me aſſure you both, that her deceaſed Ladyſhip's Memory will ever be ſo much the dearer to me, by how much her Penetration could foreſee, that neither my Son or her Daughter could have been ſo well qualified for rendering any others happy as themſelves; but let us not dwell too long upon this; let us examine and ſee what Fruits the Parchment will yield us.

His Lordſhip then unfolding, read it over to us, wherein her Ladyſhip had given to me all her monied Fortune, to the amount of an hundred and forty thouſand Pounds, and about thirteen thouſand Pounds a Year; and by a ſubſequent Writing incloſed, ſhe declared, that in Caſe I ſhould die without Iſſue, all the real Eſtate was to go to Lord *G---r---d*; and this Latter ſhe charged with the Payment of a thouſand Pounds in Money, and forty Pounds a Year to Mrs. *Thomas*, and ſome few other ſmall Donations to her Servants.

Thus being arrived to a Certainty who I was, and to the Title of a vaſt Fortune, my Father-in-law, had no further Occaſion to be aſhamed of my Alliance.

Had this Diſcovery happened before the Earl's thorough Reconciliation to us, it might have had much worſe Effects; for it would then have ſtripped him of Part of his gayeſt Plumes, but now it was parted with under all the Pleaſure imaginable, neither Side much concerning ourſelves, who had the Reputation of it; for tho' the Earl, till his Death, was at every Family-Expence, both for himſelf and us, yet to a By-Stander, he would have appeared in no better Light than that of a Boarder with us.

The Serenity of that Calm which we had enjoyed for near three Years, was greatly interrupted, as to his Lordſhip and myſelf, by a Letter we received from *Stringer* in his Confinement; which, with many others having reſerved, I ſhall here give it my Reader *verbatim*.

Moſt

Moſt worthy, but injured, Lord,

YOUR former Self, but ſince your bittereſt Enemy, moſt deſervedly labouring under the Weight of your Lordſhip's Diſpleaſure, beſet with every deſtructive Horror, that either can affect the human Syſtem with Woe, or agonize the Soul, in moſt penitent Manner, humbly implores your Lordſhip's Clemency to himſelf and his Fellow-ſufferers, ſtill remaining in a frightful Durance; ſuch of us, I mean, as are yet alive; for one of us, the eldeſt, hath given us Occaſion to envy him the happy Stroke of Death, which having withdrawn him to our Parent Earth, hath releaſed him from a far more wretched Confinement.

LET not your Lordſhip's Indignation rage for ever, againſt the unworthy Objects of your Commiſeration; but as Creatures beneath your Lordſhip's Regard for Puniſhment, eaſe, O! eaſe our grinding Anguiſh. We crave but the Freedom of the Air, that common Bounty of Heaven, to its worſt of Creatures; but when we reflect upon our Villainy, how can I intreat your Lordſhip for it.

THE more I conſider your Lordſhip's paſt Benevolence to me, the more aggravating my Crimes appear; till riſing to my View in the moſt baneful Garb, far loathſomer than any other Imagination can poſſibly paint them; deſpairing of your Pity, I am overwhelmed with Miſery.

MY good Lord, how terrible a Shock muſt it prove to the human Faculties, to conſider they have been exerciſed in Villainy beyond a

Poſſibility

Poſſibility of Retribution! O! were it but to be compaſſed, that I could avoid myſelf, my own Heart, my own Conſcience, there might ſtill be Hope.---Hope! ſaid I?---O! Hope, thou only Balſam to a feſtering Conſcience, poſſeſſed of thee, my Portion might be ſtill tolerable; but doomed to perpetual Abſence of every gladſome future Expectation, though ever ſo remote, I am ſunk beneath the brutal Generation, who, though they hope no Good, yet dread no Ill; how far beneath theſe then is my Condition, hoping no Joy, with every Ill to fear.

WHAT worſe can Hell produce, than hopeleſs, endleſs Pain? Self-exiſting, ever freſh, renewed each Moment, nor ſpent by Time, nor flows it by Succeſſion? but ever is, one eternal Amplitude of Woe. Even Change of Horrors, rolling in Progreſſion, would miniſter ſome Eaſe by Removal; but mine, like veſtal Flames, are ever compleat, themſelves their Source, they burn without Remiſſion.

WHILST I am writing this, my Lord, I retort upon myſelf, from the Fund of my own Experience in Men and Things, that my Petition muſt be in vain; but when I return to myſelf, and reflect, that I am writing to your Lordſhip, ſo great a Stranger to the general Ways of Reſentment, what can I not conceive from your Generoſity? till weighing my own Enormities, too rank for even the Clemency of Heaven itſelf, theſe over-balancing the Beam, I loſe all Footing on your Forgiveneſs.-----It cannot be.-----I'll urge no more.----Another State makes at leaſt an Alteration of Torments, and any Change muſt

be

be preferable to the Hell at preſent within me. Wherefore, my dear Lord, adieu; before this may gain the Favour of your Eye, O think! the wretched *Stringer* may be no more.-----Life, without Hope, is living Death to me,

My ever injured Lord,

in Pity remember

STRINGER.

THIS Epiſtle, fraught with the blackeſt Strokes of Horror and Deſpair, from one ſo much formerly cheriſhed in Lord *G---r---d*'s Boſom, wrought ſo far upon his Lordſhip as to mitigate the Severity of his Judgment upon the Criminals; he called to mind former Paſſages of *Stringer*'s Life, placed every Scene in the moſt placid View, and from the Latitude of his Thoughts upon human Frailty in general, had made ſuch large and favourable Allowances for *Stringer*, by firſt bringing to account the Violence of his over-bearing Paſſion for me, then the ſeaſonable Supply miniſtred to him by the Earl, at a Time of his greateſt Extremity, when deſtitute of his wonted Support from his Lordſhip; and laſtly, the alluring Proſpect of a future Competency; all which, weighing againſt the ſingle Force of a Man's indigent Integrity, he told me, that ſhocking as *Stringer*'s Conduct had been, it was his Opinion, all Circumſtances conſidered, that he was not the only Man who might have run ſuch Lengths,

under the like Exigencies; or, at leaſt, he was inclinable to believe he had ſufficiently ſmarted for his Villainy, and was then truly repentant; but what weighed the moſt with him, he ſaid, for Lenity, was, that Providence having ſo benignly interpoſed in favour of us, who undoubtedly were greater Offenders with regard to it, than the vileſt of our Fellow-creatures could prove to us, we ought, in Imitation of that Example, to extend our Benevolence likewiſe to them, ſo far as our Sphere for Action would reach to; and that, for his Part, though he had been ſo great a Sufferer by *Stringer*'s Means, yet, as his Affliction had not been perpetual, ſo neither ought *Stringer*'s to be; and then deſired me, if I ſuſpected his Opinion of Error, to give him mine.

My ever dear Lord, replied I, though I muſt confeſs, that any Abatement of your rigorous Doom againſt *Stringer* and his Accomplices, was one of the laſt Things in Life that I ſuſpected, yet, under the Force of your Lordſhip's Reaſoning, to which I entirely ſubmit myſelf, far be it from me to diſagree with you.----No, my Lord, your Will hath ever hitherto been mine; nor ſhall any private Reſentment of my own, create the leaſt Jarring in our future Sentiments; but ſtill, my Lord, permit me to proceed a Step further, nor will I, unjuſtly, take all Merit to myſelf, of Compliance only with your Pleaſure; for I flatter myſelf too much, upon the natural Concurrence of my Sentiments with thoſe of your Loriſhip, to forfeit the good Opinion I may have of myſelf on that Account,

count, for any momentary Praiſe, to be acquired from an uninclined Accordannce to you. All my Fear is, that their Principles ſhould be ſo vitiated, as not to permit them to demean themſelves virtuouſly for the future; in which Caſe, I know not how far your Lordſhip may even become acceſſary to thoſe Evils their Devices may bring upon others.

Biddy, ſaid his Lordſhip, Mercury, in the Mine, unoccupied, though it may abound in noxious Particles, which from injudicious Management, when expoſed, may do infinite Miſchiefs; yet, neither is it void of ſuch Principles, as properly actuated, prove moſt beneficial: So thoſe poor Wretches, loaded with the baſe Alloy of perniciout Principles, having but the Sparks of latent Honeſty inherent, having paſſed through the Crucible of Afflictions, may ſtill become beneficial Members of Society.

I ADMIT, that ſhould they, when thro' my Licence at Liberty, prove deſtructive to any, though not to my Will, it may be immediately imputed to me; but ſhould only one of them turn out a valuable Member, ſhall I not have the Satisfaction of having afforded the Opportunity for it? whereupon, upon all Conſiderations, I am byaſſed to releaſe them.

HIS Lordſhip ſhewed the Letter to his Father; and at the ſame Time informed him, of the Reſult of our Conference; but the very Name of *Stringer* was ſo odious to him, that though he could not condemn his Lordſhip's Charity, he begged it might be one of the Conditions of his Releaſe, that he for ever

ever after ſhould avoid his Preſence; and to engage him the rather to Performance, he tranſmttted him, through his Lordſhip, an handſome Donation.

THE limitted Space for their Confinement upon the Perjury, having for ſome ſmall Time been expired, they lay now in Execution only for the Damages, given upon the Conſpiracy; ſo that in order to their Diſcharge from that, his Lordſhip ſent over his Releaſe; and the Preſents from both their Lordſhips, amounted to far more, than would clear their Way out of the Jail, and fit them out with Apparel; but all came too late, for anſwering the Effect intended; for ſome Time having paſſed in Preparation for this benevolent Purpoſe; and, as I preſume, *Stringer* deſpairing of Mercy, the Meſſenger upon his Return to us, reported, that *Player* was paſt reaping any Benefit from our Clemency, not being judged capable of ſurviving many Hours. That *Stringer*, ſoon after writing to his Lordſhip, had in a Fit of Deſpondency hanged himſelf; and that *Eſther*, having for a long Time loſt all uſe of her Senſes, was become the moſt miſerable Spectacle breathing; nor was it at all probable, ſhe could live a Month to an End.

THE Earl ſurvived the Birth of my ſeventh Child, and at his Death, was ſucceeded in Honours by my dear Lord, to whom alſo, he gave ſuch Parts of his Eſtate, as could any ways be ſpared from his younger Children.

The E N D.